DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 035 819 AC 006 319

AUTHOR	MACKIE, RICHARD
TITLE	CITIZENS' FORUM; ITS ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT, 1943-1963.
INSTITUTION	TORONTO UNIV. (ONTARIO).
PUB DATE	68
NOTE	161P.; M.A. THESIS.
AVAILABLE FROM	LIBRARY, ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION, 102 BLOOR ST. W., TORONTO 5, ONTARIO
EDRS PRICE	EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$8.15
DESCRIPTORS	ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION, BIBLIOGRAPHIES, *DISCUSSION PROGRAMS, EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES, *EDUCATIONAL RADIO, *EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION, *HISTORICAL REVIEWS, LISTENING GROUPS, MASTERS THESES, PROGRAM CONTENT, *PUBLIC AFFAIRS EDUCATION
IDENTIFIERS	*CANADA, CITIZENS FORUM

ABSTRACT

THE HISTORY OF CITIZENS' FORUM IN CANADA 1943-68 SHOWS HOW IT USED A COMBINATION OF RADIO, TELEVISION, STUDY PAMPHLETS, AND STUDY GROUPS, AND LED TO MANY NEW PROGRAMING TECHNIQUES AND FORMATS FOR RADIO AND TELEVISION. EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ENGENDERED BY THE DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR II ARE DESCRIBED, ALONG WITH EARLIER EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS BROADCASTING IN CANADA. CHANGES IN FORUM FORMAT, ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION (NATIONAL AND REGIONAL), AND BROADCASTING POLICY ARE TRACED, WITH EMPHASIS ON CHANGING POSTWAR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DEMAND, VARYING FORMS OF PANEL DISCUSSION AND FEEDBACK, THE EVENTUAL DETERIORATION OF THE GROUP DISCUSSION COMPONENT, AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TELEVISED VERSION OF THE FORUM. MAJOR TOPIC AREAS OVER THE YEARS HAVE BEEN (IN ORDER OF NUMBERS OF BROADCASTS) INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS; WORK; GOVERNMENT; MORALITY; ETHICS; AND RELIGION; AND EDUCATION. RESULTS OF THE REVIEW SUGGEST THAT: RADIO EDUCATIONS'S EFFECTIVENESS IS ENHANCED BY LISTENING GROUPS; PROGRAMS SUCH AS CITIZENS' FORUM MUST ALERT AND INFORM AS WELL AS EDUCATE; SUCCESSFUL EDUCATIONAL RADIO DEPENDS LARGELY ON SKILLED FIELD LEADERSHIP, EXTENSIVE PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES, AND CONTINUITY IN FORMAT AND BROADCAST TIME. (LY)

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CITIZENS' FORUM:

ITS ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

1943 - 1963

Richard G. A. Mackie

1968

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CITIZENS' FORUM:

ITS ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

1943 - 1963

by

Richard G.A. Mackie

A Thesis submitted in conformity with the
requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in the
University of Toronto
1968

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PREFACE

> The Adult Education movement is based on the belief that quite ordinary men and women have within themselves and their communities the spiritual and intellectual resources adequate to the solution of their own problems. Through lack of knowledge and lack of leadership these resources are often not mobilized or not directed in constructive ways.
>
> National Conference on
> Adult Education, 1946.[1]

The Adult Education movement in Canada has never lacked a rhetoric nor have its ranks ever lacked of a peculiar missionary zeal which seems to infect all who involve themselves in the movement. At the same time however, those who have chosen to identify with this movement have never been blinded to practical realities by their idealism or brought to inactivity by a satisfying rehetoric. Adult Educators have, in fact, always sought out practical means to bring about practical ends and, in this context, 'good Citizenship' has been foremost among those ends:

> The primary tasks of adult education, therefore are to awaken people to the possibilities and dangers of modern life, to help them with knowledge and leadership, and to provide channels of communication between different cultural, occupational and social groups so that the

[1] J.R. Kidd, ed. Learning and Society, Toronto: CAAE, 1963, p. 109.

> solution of human problems may be sought against the broadest background and in the interests of all. In short, the task is the imaginative training for citizenship.[2]

Although the above quotation is a statement of purpose, it could be, as well, an accurate description of the phenomenon which forms the subject of this thesis--Citizens' Forum. For the Forum was, in all respects, an attempt to provide 'imaginative training in citizenship'. The combination of media used to interpolate the Forum's message--radio, television, the study pamphlet and group--was, apart from being a relatively new approach to citizenship training, always used creatively, and resulted in the development of many new programing techniques and formats for radio and television. Similarly the extensive and well researched coverage given external and domestic affairs, and the Canadian and community perspectives provided these affairs required, in itself, a substantial and imaginative effort.

Indeed, the imaginative approach taken by the Citizens' Forum planners towards the subject of citizenship education was one of the primary reasons for undertaking this study on the belief that it may eventually lead to or tell us something that might be of significance to present day adult educators in approaching this question.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 109.

In respect to the reader's expectations, however, it should be noted that this study is not, in any sense of the word, definitive. It is *primarily* concerned with the origins and development of the Citizens' Forum project and the affect on the programme of the media choosen as the vehicle of the Forum's message. There is also some commentary provided on the depth and point of view of the message conveyed by Forum but this aspect of the Forum programme was not emphasized as this subject is, in itself, of sufficient magnitude to warrant a separate study, as are by the way, Forum's social and cultural foundations.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to both the Board and Directors of the Canadian Association for Adult Education for granting me access to their Archives on Citizens' Forum. To Mrs. Isabel Wilson, I would extend a special thank you for her time, constructive criticism and faultless guidance.

R. G. A. Mackie
November 1968

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ABBREVIATIONS

C.A.A.E. - Canadian Association for Adult Education

CAAE ARCHIVES - The archives of the Canadian Association for Adult Education, 21 Sultan St., Toronto 5, Ontario.

CITIZENS' FORUM (plus date) - Refers to the file housed in the CAAE Archives of the Reports, Papers and Correspondence on Citizens' Forum for year of cited date.

C.B.C. - Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

PART I

BACKGROUND TO FORUM

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

The Twenties

The level of prosperity that obtained from the transition of the Canadian wartime economy following the peace in 1918, excepting for a brief period in the early 1920's, heightened and ultimately assumed the proportions of a "boom" in the late years of that decade. Public services and government expenditure increased; western expansion was being pushed forward; and Canadian exports were in demand. All signs pointed toward an era of unparalleled economic growth. The Canadian economy, however, had its orientation in primary industry and the export trade, both of which were highly susceptible to fluctuations in world trade. Unfortunately the cautionary outlook that this knowledge ought to have occasioned in those who were responsible for planning and forecasting the Canadian economy was obscured and the warnings that heralded the depression went unnoticed.

Moreover in the late 1920's trade to the European markets which, generally speaking, had increased throughout the twenties became increasingly competitive as that decade wore on. In Europe the production of goods increased as the roots of reconstruction began to take hold and this increased production, in partnership with that of the new world, soon began to outdistance the demand for many goods and subsequently it adversely affected export prices. Further hindrances to Canada's export trade were provided in the form of the protective tariffs leveed by the European states upon agricultural goods.

Internally, the development encouraged by the prosperity of the twenties--the capital for which had been, in large measure, borrowed abroad--caused many of the Provincial governments to incur large debts. Regional, economic interdependency was also weakening, placing an additional competitive strain--a domestic one--upon the economy.

Then late in 1929 the prosperity which had characterized that period came to an abrupt end. The process is well known. The export trade or, more specifically, export prices, the Achilles heel of the Canadian economy, fell causing purchases and then production to fall off. This in turn

> led to unemployment and a further reduction of purchases. The process became cumulative. Falling income and rising unemployment led to a drop in revenue for governments; and, at the same time, to increases in government expenditures. A large part of the debt of governments and private corporations was owed outside of Canada, and there loomed up the problem of meeting these interest payments in the

> currencies of other countries when the funds made available by Canadian exports were declining.[1]

There was, indeed, no way for the economy to go but down at this point.

The Thirties

Generally speaking, government planners, organizers and economists were as ineffectual in treating the disordered thirties as they were in diagnosing the onset of the depression. Mackenzie King was content to play the waiting game and although his primary concern was for national unity, he failed to recognize that the political sectionalism that had developed during the two decades following the Great War was rooted in the Canadian economy. Under King political action often took the form of a Royal Commission and Bennett who succeeded, or rather interrupted, King's term of office was able to accomplish little. Indeed, prior to the 1935 federal election, in attempting "to reform the capitalist system and restore the nation's health"[2] Bennett, characteristically, rammed through parliament a programme[3] which uncharacteristically reeked, or so it was thought of at the time, of out and out socialism. Bennett's efforts were soon rewarded by the Canadian public--King's government was returned in the 1935 election. By this time, however, the depression was slowly taking on a milder form, and although most of Bennett's 'new deal' legislation was declared unconstitutional by the courts, "this final judgment... together with the imbalance of the federal system, glaringly revealed by the depression, led King to appoint a Royal Commission in 1937 to inquire into all the problems of Dominion-Provincial relations"[4]. The importance of King's appointment of the Royal Commission (1937), afterwards known as the Rowell-Sirois Commission, and, indeed, even of Bennett's unsuccessful attempt to introduce new social legislation, goes beyond the specific issue of the acts themselves. What was important was that Bennett did attempt to introduce the legislation and King did appoint the 1937 Commission and by so doing acknowledged and accepted the task of initiating social reform. These were the first signs, albeit tenuous ones, that "the laisser-faire state was coming to an end; the period of a controlled, a planned, society was beginning."[5] The anger and suspicion created among some sectors of the Canadian citizenry that manifested itself in the rampant political sectionalism of that era, was, itself, a warning to the 'old guard' political parties that in the years to come any stand taken by government upon present circumstances would have to be examined in the light of future consequences.

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[1] S.A. Saunders and E. Back. The Rowell-Sirois Commission, Part I, A Summary of the Report (Toronto, 1941), p. 15.

[2] J.M.S. Careless. Canada: A Story of Challenge (Toronto, 1963), p. 368.

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[3] This programme refers to the findings of the Price Spreads Inquiry (1934) --an investigation headed by H.H. Stevens, Bennett's Minister of Trade and Commerce, into the retail trade industry which unearthed a number of distressing facts about working conditions and wages in that particular segment of the Canadian Economy.

[4] Careless, p. 369.

The Outbreak of War

The dawning of this awareness, although refreshing, was late in coming and those terrible years were to leave many deep and painful wounds--wounds which, in healing, would leave disfiguring scars upon the memories of all Canadians. The intensity of these memories and the perceptions that began to develop towards the end of the 1930's concerning Canada's socio-economic stability provided the emotional and fiscal groundwork that facilitated the massive reorganization of Canada's national resources that was demanded after Canada declared war on Nazi Germany (19 September 1939).

And from the outset of the war

> strict regulation was undertaken ... trained brains were called upon, and pro-

---

[5] A.R.M. Lower. Colony to Nation: A History of Canada (Toronto, 1964), p. 521.

> fessors and their former students soon were occupying a large place in the direction of affairs. Controls were instituted over foreign exchange, over profits, and eventually over the whole range of prices, wages, and employment. With extremely high taxation, the payment of high proportion of expenditure out of revenue and huge war loans with rigorous surveillance over civilian production and some commodity rationing, Canada by the middle of the war had a tightly regulated economy.[6]

The Moral Equivalent of War

In addition to the rigor after which government planners attempted to reconstitute Canadian fiscal policy a number of men and women[7] who were involved in the adult education movement in Canada and who were concerned that the movement was neglecting its wartime duty, met in conference during December[8] of 1942 to discuss their responsibilities "in stimulating and giving guidance to a process of public enlightenment and awakening regarding the issues of the war and objectives in the post-war world."[9]

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[6] Lower, p. 533.

[7] These men and women met as a special programme committee of the Canadian Association for Adult Education. Those attending the meeting as committee members were: Dr. W.H. Brittain of Macdonald College, Watson Thomson of the University of Manitoba, Extension Department, R.E.G. Davis of the Y.M.C.A. and Canadian Youth Commission, Neil Morrison of the C.B.C., Mrs. G.V. Ferguson of Winnipeg and R.T. McKenzie of the University of British Columbia. Those asked to attend as resource persons were R.B. Inch of the C.B.C's National Programme Office, David Petegorsky of the National Film Board; Prof. F.R. Scott of McGill University; and Harry Avison of Macdonald College. The director of the CAAE E.A. Corbett chaired the meeting.

[8] The conference dates were December 27 - January 2, 1943.

It was recognized by those attending the December Conference "that although the prospects of victory are brighter than at any time since the fall of France, to take victory for granted or to suppose it near would be utter folly."[10] By acknowledging that a severe and protracted war was a very real possibility, these men and women were affirming the necessity of taking a serious look at how the war was being waged on the home front. They realized that only a partial victory could be won with the gun and cannonade and that ultimate victory depended upon "an enlightened and effective national will."[11] It was with this feeling, then, that these men and women set themselves the task of attempting to build a more dynamic, popular conception of the war effort, both "in terms of what we are fighting against and above all in terms of the new world which can emerge from the war."[12]

The disillusionment felt by various sectors within the Canadian economy regarding many of the nations democratic institutions that set in during the 1920's and

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[9] "Proceedings of the Special Programme Committee (Dec. 1942)" Citizens' Forum (1942-43), Toronto: The CAAE Archives, p. 1 - hereafter cited as Special Programme Committee.

[10] Ibid., p. 3. [11] Ibid., p.3. [12] Ibid., p.3.

1930's and "the failure to [effectively] guide public opinion to a critical examination of the social processes by which ... popular aspirations for a better world might be fulfilled"[13] were sobering lessons which, the December Conferees felt, Canada could not afford to experience again. Yet with the declaration of war in 1939, they realized that Canada had again become involved in a situation of similar potential. However, if the pestilence of war was to come, and it had come, and if the terrible cost of that war was ever to find even a partial justification, there would have to be established following the war "a foundation in public opinion and the public will of the great democracies for policies "of the greatest wisdom, farsightedness and generosity"[14]. The task of providing such a foundation was in truth, the moral equivalent of war; war that was to be staged in the minds of men and to be resolved through "an efficient and sustained process of public education and mobilization through every available agency and medium".[15] A difficulty of course, was that the antagonists in this struggle were not easily discernible. They wore no uniform. They were both, short and tall, fat and thin, old and young, and of all colours and creeds. Indeed there were only three qualities they possessed by which they

[13] Ibid., p.3. [14] Ibid., p. 5. [15] Ibid., p.6.

could be identified and these were ignorance, defeatism and apathy--democracy's oldest foemen.

Ideological Directives

To give direction to this 'war', those in attendance at the December Conference felt that some statement and "consideration of general social principles and goals[16] should be made with a view (a) to furthering *their own* clarification and integration around explicit purposes and, (b) to give, through that clarification and integration, the maximum assurance of direction to the Post-War reconstruction programme itself."[17] The statement was to be purposefully idealistic, and later to be interpolated into more realistic terms. The principles enunciated were seven in number--a portent of things to come--and read as follows:[18]

> 1. The first basic principle of the emergent society was formulated as the acceptance of *total responsibility of all*

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[16] One should regard the social principles and goals enunciated above with a guarded view. For although this statement displays an acute social consciousness, it represents, just as much an effort, to provide an inspirational rhetoric to which adult educationists could relate and around which they would hopefully rally to initiate a reconstruction project.

[17] Special Programme Committee (December, 1942), p.7.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 7-12.

for each and each for all ... it implied a complete abandonment of 'rugged individualism' ... Reciprocal responsibility of the individual for society (community, nation, world) and of society for the individual was involved.

2. The principle of planning was accepted as an expression of the principle of social responsibility.

3. The third principle which emerged was that human beings are ends, not means, and that a desirable society must implement that condition ... Planning must not only serve the ends of general human welfare but must not frustrate human personality. This means that what the average citizen puts into it is as important as what he gets out of it.

4. The principle was accepted that an individual's status should be determined by his function in economic society--i.e. in terms of the efficiency with which he performs tasks required in the service of the community ... status ultimately should not be determined by social priviledge, financial power or property rights.

5. A fifth principle was that the focus of concern in regard to economic activity as a whole must be transferred from production to consumption ... Consumption goals--such as the meeting of universal minimum standards in food, clothing and housing--should become the main incentives of economic activity and the prime objectives of planning.

6. The fundamental characteristic of the new social patterns was seen to lie in a new systhesis of the individual, and the collective. New forms, new attitudes, new institutions are required which bring together the legitimate values of both the individual and society while rejecting the negative features of both unrestrained individualism and authoritarian collectivism ... Individual rights must be balanced by social obligation, individual initiative by social verification.

7. A final principle was expressed as the need for a constantly expanding sense of

> collective purpose. In contrast with the merely individual purposes of laisser-faire society, the mergent order needs also great social purposes ... as binding and motivating forces ...

On the one hand it may be argued that the principles enunciated above represent a rather naive and simplistic faith not unlike "the sentimental and escapist idealism of much of the ... activity after the last war."[19] On the other hand, the principles set out at the December Conference were not formulated with fingers crossed or in fantasy of wish fulfillment. The conference members were fully aware that there were "major economic power groups who are completely unreconciled to the prospect that the war may result in the permanent acceptance in Canada of this principle of planning" and that "the lack of democratic representation on most of the war-planning boards testifies to the fact that these same economic power groups have won the first round in their struggle to ensure that the 'shackles of planning' are removed at the end of the war".[20] It was then, with this knowledge that the seven principles were formulated. They were, in short, founded in the cold light of reality and although formed as ideals represented a highly practical

[19] Special Programme Committee, p. 20.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

focus of attention "on the planning philosophy which is implicit in much of our war organization and on the planning techniques which have evolved and to show what will be required if they are to become the instruments of achievement of a creative democratic society."[21] The document produced at the December Conference or at least the statement of principles contained by it would clearly fall left of center if it were to be placed on a political continuum. And, of course, there were political activists represented on the committee that formulated the statement. Watson Thomson, for example, was a very articulate and powerful spokesman for the political left and F.R. Scott, although best known as a poet, demonstrated his political bias as President of the C.C.F. party. For that matter E.A. Corbett, who chaired the conference, had been accused on a number of occasions of being a 'fellow traveller' and similar, erroneous, accusations were levelled at Morrison and Sim from time to time. However, apart from Thompson and Scott, none of the committee members were political activists or were the sentiments which gave birth to the statement of principles produced at the December Conference political ones. Their concern, and this is said without wishing to appear trite, was a human rather than political concern and the approach that they made to social progress, and this, after all, is what we are talking about here, was as educators and not as politicians. This approach was clearly defined by E. A. Corbett--some years later--"social progress can only come about through improvement in the quality of human beings, and that improvement can only come through education".[22]

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[21] Special Programme Committee, p. 15.

The themes of reconstruction, human rights, social purpose and responsibility which were formulated by the programme committee as the ideals toward which a society should move were particularly applicable to the Canadian scene. For, whereas the Great War was instrumental in fostering the emergence of Canada as an independent political entity, the depression and World War II were phenonema which marked the infancy of new social directions in Canada. The depression had staggered laisser-faire individualism,[23] the traditional social orientation of Canadians and the interdependence[24] upon which the efficiency of the Canadian war machine depended

[22] E.A. Corbett, We Have With Us To-night (Toronto, 1957), p. 221.

[23] See Lower, p. 492.

[24] This interdependence, of course, attained its zenith during the years in World War II, in which the focus of society was on production and modes of increasing production. Following the war interdependence was and still is being sustained, although at not so high a level, by among other things. The urbanization of the Canadian population and the ever increasing specialization of her working force.

soon led temporarily at least, to its being virtually abandoned. The vacuum left in society following the abandonment of this concept was filled by the social counterpart of economic collectivism--the twentieth century idea of community. This, however, was a new and difficult orientation for Canadians to adjust to;[25] for although, historically, Canadians have not been a nation of planners, the times necessitated immediate and responsible action in this direction, both in fiscal and social policy. Fortunately, as mentioned above Canadian fiscal policy was placed under strict regulation and was viable by the middle of the war. However, one cannot legislate social responsibility or regulate a society's lack of forsight,without which the benefits of social policy remain latent. This is something which must come from within society itself; out of the hearts and minds of a people. This is not to say that the investiture of social policy with responsibility and foresight cannot be encouraged, however, for it can.

It was to discover some ways and means of encouraging this investiture that the conferees at the December Conference were concerned, for they believed that

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[25] The difficulties encountered in adjusting to this new social orientation is still very much with Canadian society. Indeed, that the seven principles enunciated above are as crucial to present-day Canadian society as they appeared to have been in the forties is sufficient evidence of this fact.

> only by raising our sights to the fulfillments of ... human desires can the frustrated hopes of the last decades be transformed into a dynamic conviction of the possibility of regenerating our world. At the same time, it was recognized that to emphasize only Ends without directing attention equally to the difficulties in respect of Means was to encourage a repetition of the sentimental and escapest idealism of much of the Peace and League of Nations activity after the last war. It was therefore necessary to link the long term goals with actual situations and trends in the present. In most cases, the concrete situation in the present would be the point of departure and our business would be to interpret that present situation in relation to a desirable future."[26]

All being adult educators, those attending the December Conference were aware that "on the whole adult education had tended to turn out solidly rational reading and study material which appealed more to the converted than to the non-intellectual majority who had to be mobilized."[27] Therefore, it was felt that if their proposed programme for Post-War reconstruction were to be successful, it would be necessary to make "more use ... of graphic styles and imaginative presentations ... Above all, the most skillful use should be made of the great new instruments of public education - the film and the radio."[28]

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[26] Special Programme Committee (December, 1942), p. 27.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[28] *Ibid.*, p.28.

CHAPTER II

FILM AND RADIO

Film

That film and radio were suggested as media by which the programme of reconstruction proposed at the December Conference could and should be implemented was not surprising. For both the film and broadcasting industries in Canada previous to and during the war were greatly concerned with the preservation and perpetuation of the public will and interest in citizenship. Indeed, although the Federal Government did sponsor a Motion Picture Bureau, much of the credit for developing and popularizing the medium of film in Canada prior to 1939 belonged to a number of amateur film makers and a group of citizens co-operatively organized as the National Film Society of Canada. On May 2, 1939, however, a National Film Act was passed, on the recommendation of one, John Grierson, "creating a National Film Board with authority to devise, from all the Government Departments' separate requirements, a unified policy, an integrated production schedule and a plan for distribution to meet the needs of the respective Departments."[1] Although the cold and legislative terms of enactment providing for the National Film Board hardly betray its concern for the public will and interest in citizenship, its purpose as enunciated by the Boards first Commissioner, John Grierson,[2] does "the main thing is to see this National Film Board plan as a service to the Canadian public, as an attempt to create a better understanding of Canada's present, and as an aid to the people in mobilising their imagination and energy in the creating of Canada's future ... A country is only as vital as its processes of self-education are vital."[3] Although this statement of purpose was made in June of 1944, some years after Grierson had been appointed Commissioner of the National Film Board, the thought it reflects was deeply rooted in his past. For Grierson had decided early in his career that--"like the radio and the newspaper, the film is one of the keys to men's will."[4] However, perhaps the best statement of

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[1] Hardy Forsyth, ed. Grierson on Documentary (London, 1946), p. 15. - hereafter cited as Grierson.

[2] Grierson was both a keen social scientist and film maker. He was awarded the Rockefeller Research Fellowship in Social Science in 1924 and served many governmental institutions in Britain as Film Officer before his appointment as executive head to the N.F.B. in October of 1939--an organization very much of his own creation.

[3] Grierson, p. 23.

[4] Grierson, p. 152.

Grierson's thought on the role of film during those troubled years, and one that explains the resolution of those attending the December Conference to utilize film in implementing their programme of reconstruction, reads--"the materials of citizenship today are different and the perspectives wider and more difficult; but we have, as ever, the duty of exploring them and of waking the heart and will in regard to them."[5] In reporting to the December Conference, Dr. David Petegorsky of the National Film Board and close associate of Grierson's commented upon the policy that governed the Board's film production, stating

> that almost every film they produce have these aspects: (a) reportorical and factual; (b) moral--i.e. showing the positive aspects of such war situations as they are reporting; and (c) reconstruction i.e. suggesting that the extension of these positive features of war-situations (for example hopeful new types of social relations) into the post-war future can be the means by which a new and better world comes about. The seeds of the future are in the present; the picture of a desirable future can be built up from elements existing in our present situation.[6]

Broadcasting in Canada

The social and cultural reference that Grierson provided for the Canadian film all of a sudden, as it were, had evolved more gradually in radio. The fact that radio in Canada lacked an indigeneous cultural reference was officially brought to the attention of the Federal Government on 11 September 1929 at which time the findings of the Aird Commission on Broadcasting were made known.

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[5] Grierson, p. 180.

[6] Special Programme Committee, p. 29.

> The Commission found that unanimity existed in Canada on one question--Canadian listeners desired Canadian broadcasting. The bulk of present programs were American in origin and this denied an outlet to Canadian talent and was a definite hindrance to the development of Canadian art and culture. The cultural diversity of the nation required a mutual understanding by both races and such understanding could never be possible without and exchange of ideas and, in general, the common foundation of a knowledge of both cultures ... The solution proposed by the Commission was the erection of a public corporation to act as a national trustee of the public interest. It was considered that the corporation would operate as a public service but should have the advantages of a private enterprise.[7]

The recommendations made in the Aird Commission satisfied a long-standing need of Canada's. Radio broadcasting had been placed in the hands of the Federal Government as early as 1905 with the enactment of the Wireless-Telegraph Act. Radio broadcasting, as we know it, however, cannot be said to have begun until December 19[illegible] when Canadian Marconi, the just recipient of the first radio broadcasting license in Canada aired its

[7] D. B. Sumner. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Queens University, 1949), A Published Master of Arts Thesis, pp. 10-11.

first programme. From 1919 onwards, the growth of radio in Canada was both phenomenal and fraught with difficulties. Interference from foreign stations and various electrical gagetry; unrestrained commercial advertising and contentious programming by groups with parochial interests; and inadequate coverage of rural Canada were ever present annoyances--threads which once woven formed a tapestry of discontent that spread over the entire country. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries, whose department had fallen heir to the jurisdiction over broadcasting formerly maintained by the Department of Naval Service (July 1922), "admitted frankly that the matter of regulation was one of which his Department was in doubt and he asserted that a Royal Commission would be appointed to inquire into the radio situation in Canada."[8] The result of the Minister's assertion was, of course, the Aird Commission which was appointed under Order-in-Council P.C. 2108, 6 December 1928.

To remedy the ills affecting the broadcasting industry in Canada, the Commission, as indicated above, suggested that broadcasting be placed under some form of public ownership. Clearly private enterprise had been unwilling to institute broadcasting standards that were acceptable to the whole

[8] Sumner, p.9.

of the Canadian listening public.[9] It was with this in mind, then, that the Commissioners recommended that the public interest be served "by a national company which will own and operate all radio broadcasting stations located within the Dominion of Canada, the company to be called the Radio Broadcasting Company."[10]

Unfortunately, however,

> the recommendations of the Aird Commission at the outset fell on barren grounds for, as is frequent in Canada, the government that commissioned it was not in power to hear the report. Besides, in the year its report was made, the financial structure of North America was shaken profoundly, and it did not appear that the new Federal administration could dream of embarking on so vast a scheme of capital investment. However, the important result was the decision to compete ... on what eventually became cultural rather than political grounds.[11]

It was not until 1936, at which time the C.B.C. was set up, that the spirit of what had been recommended in the Aird Commission was implemented. And, again, it was the broadcasting public's discontent that precipated the action.[12] Canadian audiences were disturbed by the slowness with which the national radio system was extending itself and with the quality of the programs it aired. In response to the public demand for a better system, a parliamentary committee was set up in 1936 to determine the appropriateness of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Act of 1932 as it related to both the administration and operation of broadcasting activities in Canada. The investigation conducted by the Committee led it to recommend that there be formed "a corporation with an honorary board of nine governors chosen to give representation to all parts of Canada, this board to operate through a general manager and an assistant general manager who will be responsible to the board for the conduct of all business of the Corporation."[13] The constitution of the Board of Governors was to be as " a part time organization composed of nine members who are chosen in such a manner by the Governor in Council as to be broadly representative of the principal geographic divisions in Canada. The Board possesses an honorary status in that the members receive only a token remuneration instead of a salary. The Parliamentary Committee of 1936 recommended that the members of this board be Canadians of braod outlook and representative of the nation."[14] In recommending that the board should be so constituted the Committee of 1936 was in fact acknowledging the sovereignty of the Canadian Broadcasting audience and the primacy of the public interest in formulating policy. Also implicit in the constitution of the C.B.C. were affirmations of the country's strong provincial allegiances and cultural diversity. Yet the C.B.C. was a national institution and its aim was always to become "in its own words, 'creative in a truly Canadian sense.' For 'the diversity of cultures which contribute to our Canadian heritage provides a national asset of inestimable value. They are the warp and weft from which a pattern that is distinctively Canadian is slowly taking an active and vital force in weaving these diverse traditions into something that is new and significant'."[15]

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[9] Private enterprise favoured a policy which was tantamount to unrestricted advertising on radio and as opposition to such advertising was particularly animate in Canada during the 1920's and 1930's, and subsequently restricted, there was little initiative taken by this sector "to finance unproved broadcasting..." See Allan Miller Thomas, A Concept of the Audience, an unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1962, p.99ff. What initiative was taken by the private sector was usually limited to financing regional programmes centered in urban Canada near the advertisers chief market--thus leaving rural Canada without satisfactory service. See E.A.Corbett's We Have With Us Tonight (Toronto, 1957), Chapter Six.

[10] Canada. Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting Report (Ottawa, 1929), pp.2-3.

[11] Thomas, p. 104.

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[12] The most vocal and powerful voice raised in urging improved broadcasting belonged to Allan Plaunt who both organized and underwrote the Canadian Radio League. It was, in large measure, owing to Plaunt and the League that "the strongly developed lobby financed by the supporters of private control" over radio was overcome and the broadcasting system outlined by Aird Commission was accepted. Quote taken from E.A. Corbett We Have With Us Tonight (Toronto, 1957), p. 58.

[13] Sumner, p. 16n.

Not the least of those activities designed to make operational its responsibility to the 'diverse traditions' of our country was the attention given adult educational broadcasts by the C.B.C.. Talks and discussion programmes, both in French and English, were aired on all manner of subjects--the community, the farm, labour relations, women and children, rural affairs, dramatic instruction and the school formed just some of many topics that were designed as programmes having a strong educational bias. Clearly, the range of topics cited above is indicative of the C.B.C.'s attempt in its early years to provide for and anticipate the public will and interest. Yet these early broadcasts were important "not because ... of the listening public to which they appeal, but because they keep the radio receptive to democratic influences, and to the social awareness which underlies the adult education movement."[16] And although the effect of these broadcasts was limited, what success they did enjoy was undoubtedly owing to the close co-operation that existed between the C.B.C. and various adult education associations since its incorporation in

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[14] Sumner, p. 24.

[15] R.S. Lambert. "What About the C.B.C.", Food for Thought. CAAE: No. 2, February, 1940, p.4.

[16] Lambert, p. 11.

1936.[17] Canadian adult educationists had long been aware of and attempting to surmount the difficulties encountered by a public "who are interested in the world about them, but who for one reason or another lack the background which will enable them to satisfy their curiosity and concern through books, good periodicals, and informed conversation."[18] However, the sharing of this concern by the C.B.C. went beyond the simple co-operation that was needed to produce educational radio programmes. It provided the adult education movement in Canada with a voice which, hitherto, had been, in large measure, frustrated by the geography of this vast country. Conversely, radio gained a burgeoning audience who were part of the adult education movement in Canada and who, by being involved in this movement, were intimately concerned with encouraging and sustaining through their individual and perhaps, unconscious efforts, a national and social awareness--the heralds of national unity.

[17] The relationship that existed between the CAAE and C.B.C. was a particularly close one. While Director of Extension at the University of Alberta, E.A. Corbett had been the western representative of the Canadian Radio League. It was at the urging of Corbett and other League members that Gladstone Murray was appointed General Manager of the C.B.C. in 1936. Corbett, appointed to the Directorship of the CAAE in that same year, was in turn asked by Murray to serve the C.B.C. as an advisor on the use of radio for educational purposes and was responsible in part at least, for the form taken by the School Broadcasting Department within the C.B.C.

[18] Frank E. Hill and W.E. Williams. Radios Listening Groups (New York, 1941), p. 182.

CHAPTER III

PUTTING IDEAS TO WORK

Early Experiments

The co-operative relationship that developed between broadcasters and adult educationists in Canada was not a new phenonemon. The use of radio for the purposes of adult education had been attempted in Great Britain, the United States and various other countries long before the Canadian experience became viable. What came to be distinctively Canadian was the place assigned and sophistication given the radio listening group. For although experimentation in organizing study and listening groups had been undertaken by various agencies in, again, both Britain and the United States, neither experience had enjoyed the success,[1] or were later to exert the influence that resulted from "the experience of the University of St. Francis Xavier in eastern Nova Scotia. The programme of this small Roman Catholic University among the fishermen, workers and farmers had been one of education in study group focused on action, directed towards the organization of credit unions and co-operatives. This programme gave a stimulus in Canada to the whole idea of study groups and of education for action."[2]

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[1] See generally E.A.Corbett, Report on Radio Broadcasting To Schools in Canada, for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, February 1939. Part V.

Experimental work similar to that being done with study groups in Nova Scotia was taking place in the west of Canada and Ontario. Indeed, the United Farmers of Ontario were responsible for one of the earlier and successful experiments that demonstrated the value of "a discussion group program organized around a regular radio broadcast."[3] However, it was not until the spring of 1938, a year following U.F.O. experiment, that the efforts of these many regional institutions involved in the organization of study groups were given a national purpose. In that Spring, E.A. Corbett, Director of the Canadian Association of Adult Education, was commissioned by Gladstone Murray, General Manager of the C.B.C. to undertake a survey of school broadcasting in Canada. In carrying out his commission, Corbett characteristically "turned over to the C.B.C. a voluminous report not only on what was going on in school broadcasting in Canada, but in Great Britain and the United States, together with certain recommendations concerning a school broadcasting department within the C.B.C."[4] He states further that he was particularly impressed with "the attempts (not very successful by the way) the British Broadcasting Corporation had made to establish a system of organized listening groups in the British Isles".[5] The lack of success enjoyed by the British with listening groups was attributed by Corbett to the severe competition that existed between it and "a vast network of other well established community activities" and "Besides, the B.B.C. listening group programme was not directed to any one group"[6]. These thoughts combined with a knowledge of the work being done with study and listening groups in rural Canada led Corbett to believe that if the listening group was organized about a common purpose and directed at people who shared a common concern it would succeed where the British experiment had failed. Both the purpose and people were readily available in Canada. The hopelessness of the times dictated the purpose and the early experiences of those involved with the organization of study groups in rural Canada determined the audience.

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[2] R.A. Sim."Farm Radio Forum" Fundamental Education (UNESCO, October 1950), Vol. II, No. 4, p. 5.

[3] National Farm Radio Forum pub. Farm Forum Handbook (Toronto, 1949), p. 7.

Thus it followed that in the Summer of 1939, Dr. Corbett[7] met with Gladstone Murray, Donald Buchanan, the

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[4] E.A. Corbett. We Have With Us Tonight (Toronto, 1957), p. 140.

[5] Ibid., p. 140. [6] Ibid., pp. 140-141

[7] Corbett received an Honorary Doctor of Law degree from the University of Mount Allison in Sackville, New Brunswick, in 1938.

Supervisor of Public Affairs for the C.B.C., H.H. Hannan, President of the newly formed Canadian Federation of Agriculture, and others. Out of the discussions undertaken by these men "it was decided to arrange a series of radio interviews with the leaders of the farm organizations in the Provinces throughout Canada. Since a major interest among farm people was the development of the producers and consumers co-operative movement, the interviews would deal in the main with co-operatives and credit unions as media for the improvement of general living standards in rural areas."[8] So it was that in October of 1939, the programme, entitled, Inquiry Into Co-operation was aired over the national wavelengths and although it was favourably received by the Canadian farmer and those involved in the Co-operative movement, the programme was soon cancelled by the C.B.C. Upon hearing the news of the cancellation, Corbett states "I almost went through the roof. There were four more broadcasts to come, and they had been widely advertised. Besides, everyone was looking forward to the story of the St. Francis Xavier Co-operative Movement and its dramatic successes among the fishermen, farmers and miners of the Maritimes."[9]

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[8] E.A. Corbett. We Have With Us Tonight. (Toronto, 1937), p. 141.

[9] Corbett, p. 144.

Sensing political interference,[10] Corbett angrily telephone Gladstone Murray and informed him that unless the programme was given a continuance, he would be forced to release the story to the press, which he ultimately did, as the continuance was refused. Needless to say Inquiry Into Co-operation proceeded as planned.

In reminiscing about this incident in his delightful and informative book, We Have With Us Tonight, Dr. Corbett relates the story of how he met Gladstone Murray in the University Club in Toronto sometime later, asking him "'Why didn't you telephone back when I told you I would give the story to the newspaper?' His answer was one I fully understand. 'Don't you see' he said 'I wanted the story to get to the newspaper; that was the quickest and most effective way to put an end to that sort of meddling'."[11]

The victory of that moment was an important one for had the interference directed at Inquiry Into Co-Operation been sustained and not overruled the very purpose for which the C.B.C. had been set up, that is, as a 'public trust' would have been betrayed. And, as surely, it would have marked the denigration of the ideals that encouraged public affairs broadcasting in Canada by subjecting those ideals to the tyranny of political bigots, opportunists, and the solipsism of power groups. Indeed, the act of continuance given Inquiry Into Co-operation was herald to the prominence and promise that was to be soon attained by public affairs broadcasting in Canada.

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[10] The series was postponed for the months of February and March 1940, ostensibly in accordance with a 8 July 1939 C.B.C. policy statement which urged the cancellation of all controversial broadcasts on economic, social and political issues during a Federal election campaign. Schwass Interview, 5 November 1968.

[11] Corbett, p. 145.

As the series on Co-operation was drawing to a close, a second experiment was begun. The programme, entitled Community Clinic, was designed as a series of twelve broadcasts to be presented regionally in Quebec by the C.B.C. in co-operation with the Macdonald College Rural Education Service. The broadcast was programmed and evaluated by Neil Morrison and Alex Sim, both of whom had experience in producing broadcasts for rural study groups - the former with the series on Co-operation and the latter with a regional series conducted in Quebec called Adult School of the Air. The partnership of these two young men proved fruitful for the results obtained from their investigation into the various broadcasts aired under their direction demonstrated that radio listening groups could be utilized effectively as an instrument for Adult Education in Canada. Moreover, they were able to show that although interest and controversy could be created by the medium of radio, the background necessary for intelligent discussion and action necessitated supplementing the broadcasts with printed material, "the two together being more effective than either alone."[12] Also, just as the practice of determining a patient's pulse is the first step taken by a medical doctor in making his diagnosis, so did Sim and Morrison feel that some form of "pulse taking" was necessary to maintain the health of such programmes. In these early experiments, individual responses to broadcasts had been encouraged and received, however, it was felt that the communications received were not reliable as monitors of their public's opinion. Besides, the programmes were designed as communal enterprises and not individual ones, therefore, they urged that future broadcasts of this type adopt a system whereby the opinion of the audience as a whole could be made known to all involved.

As a result of these early experiments and the long standing concern of the CAAE for rural adult education,[13] the Association acting in concert with the C.B.C.,

[12] Neil M. Morrison. "Farmers Air Their Problems", Food For Thought, CAAE: No. 16, June, 1941, p.6.

[13] The CAAE's concern for rural adult education in Canada although of long standing was not formalized in terms of policy and procedure until January of 1940 at which time the Association convened a conference on rural adult education for this purpose. See D.P. Armstrong, Corbett's House, An unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, University of Toronto, 1968, pp. 126-129.

embarked upon a project that, in its heyday, would become as institutionalized as beans on Saturday night throughout rural Canada. This project was Farm Radio Forum.[14]

The Farmer's Forum

Many have written of Farm Forum and the part it had to play in uplifting and enlightening the spirit of the Canadian farmers during those difficult years when Canada was at war. And there is little I need say at this point, although frequent references to and discussion of the Farm Forum project, will be made throughout this work. There are, however, a number of points concerning the organization and execution of Farm Forum broadcasts that should be mentioned; points which hopefully will provide the reader with some insight into what will follow in succeeding chapters.

Farm Radio Forum was a product of the economic and social conditions of the time. The Canadian farmer had little time to recover from the spiritual degradation suffered by him during the Depression of the Thirties

[14] Farm Radio Forum was first aired over an eastern network comprising Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritime Provinces (1940-41). The 1940-41 programme series followed the successful publication of Canadian Farm Problems, (1940) a pamphlet series of 16 issues concerned with problems of marketing, management and living in rural Canada. The issues were prepared by a committee under the aegis of the CAAE and chaired by Dr. W.H. Brittain. It was not until the fall of 1941 that the Forum attained national status. At that time, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture came in as a third sponsor, the other two being the C.B.C. and CAAE.

when the spectre of war descended upon the world. Hunger and deprivation were ursurped by death and the fear that Fascism would topple the democratic way of life--"farmers were depressed both spiritually and economically and they felt somewhat confused. Farm Radio Forum offered to throw some light on their problems. It gave them a chance to meet together to study their problems, and to make their voice heard. It offered a way of promoting farm unity and it revived the old neighbourliness of earlier days. Thus Farm Radio Forum met a need and the farm people responded."[15] The development of the C.B.C. itself, as a publicly owned corporation invested with the tasks of protecting and developing the public interest and wareness contributed in no small manner to the service that was provided by the Farm Forum. Indeed, the point is often made in the writings on the Forum that "It is unlikely that Farm Radio Forum could have become a national project if Canada did not have a publicly owned system of radio."[16]

The national platform and audience provided the Forum by the C.B.C. and CAAE in co-operation with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture enabled rural Canada "to approach their problems more intelligently and to work together towards their solution."[17] The execution of the broadcasts which, generally speaking, followed from the suggestions derived from the experimented work conducted by Alex Sim and Neil Morrison was meant to be both entertaining and edifying. The Forum programme employed both the dramatic and discussion-types of broadcast, depending of course, upon the nature of the subject to be dealt with. The radio broadcast supplemented by printed study material, group discussion and, to complete the circle of communication, a national and provincial study-group report of findings were both broadcast on the national network and prepared in statement form to be distributed to all interested parties. This circle of communication was a central feature of Farm Radio Forum and allowed for rapid contact between all who were involved with the project. It was, in short, a convenient way of determining and sustaining the vitality of the Forum.

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[15] Frank Peers. "The C.B.C. and Public Affairs Broadcasting", Learning For Living: Education in Public Affairs by Radio, CAAE: No. 9, p. 61.

[16] Peers, p. 61.

There is ample evidence testifying to the vitality of Radio Farm Forum. Many so-called 'action projects' such as rural electrification and co-operative buying clubs and stores can be traced directly to the Forum. Also, less tangible items, but of great importance, such as "increased neighbourliness ... a broader and more tolerant outlook" and " a greater pride in farming as an occupation",[18] were cited by Forum members as having been given stimulus by their participation in Radio Farm Forum. Much of the credit for sustaining such vitality was owing to the manner in which the Forum broadcasts were executed. But also instrumental was the extensive and flexible organization that provided for the government of Farm Forum.

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[17] Peers, p. 63.

The Farm Forum Government

The chief executive authority of Farm Forum was vested in a National Board composed of members representing the sponsoring agencies and the provincial agencies responsible for the Forum organization. The Board was nominally responsible for determining Forum policy, although, in reality, this function was shared by all Forum participants. To assure a continuance of the authority invested in the Board, which was unable to meet as frequently as the task demanded, an Executive Committee composed of Board members was established to maintain its authority when out of session. Administering the plans and policies of these two bodies was a National Office; composed of a National Secretary and Treasurer, Editor and Research Director, Stenographers and Accountant. The National Office was responsible to both the Board and the provincial arms of Farm Forum. It was through this office that the findings of the study-groups, or as they were then called, 'forums', were collected and distributed; the study material prepared; the Forum news polled; and recommendations for the improvement of Farm Forum suggested. These same functions were duplicated at the provincial level by committees or councils. The difference between the two administrative levels being that the provincial committees worked extensively and directly with the forums. They were the arms, as it were, of the National Office, and, as such, fell heir to the task of organizing the forums and providing commentary on their activities. This involved many concomitant functions. They were required to keep the forums informed of regional and national farm activities; to answer questions directed at them by individual forums; and to develop leadership and sustain interest among the forums during the non-broadcasting season.

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[18] National Farm Radio Forum pub. Farm Forum Handbook (Toronto, 1949), p. 39.

The composition of the provincial committees varied. In Quebec, the forums controlled the committee's membership. In the other provinces, however, the committees were composed of members from various farm organizations, Provincial Departments of Agriculture and Education, and University Extension Departments.

The advantages that accrued from the extensive organizational structure given the Forum project were many.

The National Office and Board supplied an interested but objective viewpoint and insight into Farm Forum activities which provided the project with its national character. Similarly, the close contact that existed between the forums and the Provincial Committees, who collated and systematized the findings of the individual forums, provided the project with a rapid informational filtration system that supplied the nucelli of up-to-date information needed to make policy changes and decisions at the national level. Conversely, the 'forums' were made immediately aware, and encouraged by this awareness in turn, that the information they were passing on through their provincial committees was being implemented at the national level in policy. The free and rapid flow of information within this organization, indeed, around which the project was structured was not only a strength, it was a necessary strength without which Farm Forum could not have remained viable. For the various administrative levels of the Forum were independently funded--the National Office being financed by grants from the CAAE and Canadian Federation of Agriculture; the provincial committees and offices by the forums, various provincial farm organizations and government departments; and, of course, the C.B.C. absorbed the cost of the broadcasts. The interdependency of the organizations and persons responsible for the Forum's financing was not a contractual one, it was purely voluntary and thus, dependent upon the good will and interest of all involved. Clearly any but the most sensitive communication system would have imposed upon this good will and have eventually frustrated the interest of the communicants in the system, the majority of whom, in this instance, were the forum members themselves. And as anybody knows, we cannot really build castles in the air, for they, just as any great edifice, material or spiritual, needs the support of a strong foundation without which it will topple.

PART II

CITIZENS FORUM: ON THE AIR

CHAPTER IV

LAUNCHING THE PROJECT

There were few, if any, doubts expressed at the December Conference in 1942 as to the moral and psychological need for a programme on education for reconstruction. Nor was the urgency of this need questioned. For even as these men and women met late in 1942 the freedom which enabled them to do so was being ruthlessly stamped out by the Nazi war machine in Europe. It was, then, with a sense of urgency that steps were initiated at the Conference to provide for an extensive programme of public education. Various committees were formed and cooperation was solicited for the programme from a number of organizations among these being the C.B.C., Canadian Institute for International Affairs and the Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship. All were institutions whose concern for the public's interest and well-being was well known. However, the thought enunciated at the December Conference, did not really take substantive form until the spring of 1943, at which time the suggested programme of education for reconstruction was given endorsement by the general membership of the C.A.A.E. at its annual meeting in London, Ontario, and a deadline of autumn 1943 was set as the official launching date of the project.

Shortly after the programme had received the membership's endorsement H.R.C. Avison was appointed to undertake the organization of that part of the programme having to do with radio.[1] Under the direction of Avison and a committee[2] consisting of men active in the adult education and broadcasting, plans for the proposed programme proceeded rapidly. A conference, tentatively scheduled at the December Conference, was called for September 1943 at St. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec for the purpose of stimulating national interest and encouraging programme participation by national and regional agencies; to give final form to the programme; and, as was decided at the 'London Meeting', to officially launch the project.[3]

The task facing the programme organizers although vast, was not so great as it first seems. Study-outlines and tenative plans for the reconstruction programme had been undergoing organization in sub-committee since the December Conference. Moreover, the C.B.C. had already tested the public's reaction to a programme similar to that envisaged by the C.A.A.E. and found "the response made to this programme by men and women in all parts of Canada has been a matter of pride to all those most closely connected with the broadcasts. The files containing the letters from listeners are too voluminous to be adequately summarized ... the audience mail from the beginning of the series to the end, reveals enthusiasm for the discussions, and a unanimous request that they be continued."[4] The programme was a series of weekly panel broadcasts called "Of Things To Come". It originated in various Canadian cities and, except for Morley Callaghan who participated in all of the broadcasts in his role as 'Counsel for the People' always employed local authorities who were competent in the range of domestic and international issues discussed. The broadcast differed from the programme proposed by the C.A.A.E. in that study bulletins were not sent out or were listening groups organized for the programme.

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[1] Avison's career was a varied one. He was an ordained United Church Minister, served in a community development role in Le Pas, Manitoba and at the time he was appointed to chair this committee, 19 June 1943, held a staff appointment at Macdonald College in Quebec.

[2] Serving on Avison's committee were Neil Morrison (C.B.C.), David Petegorsky (C.F.B.), D.W. Buchanan (C.B.C.), Alex Sim (Macdonald College), Stanley Rands (University of Manitoba) and Gregory Vlastos and George Edison (Queens University). The composition of the group is important for two reasons: firstly, all shared a concern for the principles drawn up at the December Conference, and all had been involved at one time or an other in adult education. Thus both the thought expressed at the December conference and the close relationship that existed in the early part of reconstructive project between the two main sponsoring bodies (C.B.C. and CAAE) was sustained.

[3] Avison, "Letter to Dr. J.S. Thomson, 28 July 1943," Citizens Forum (1942-43) Toronto: The CAAE Archives.

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[4] "Report on the Development of the Series on Post-War Reconstruction Entitled: 'Of Things to Come'" Citizens Forum (1942-1943), Toronto: the CAAE Archives, p.2,--hereafter cited as Of Things to Come. It is, perhaps, worth noting that a number of those responsible for initialing the radio series "Of Things to Come" were also closely connected with the series being projected by the CAAE. These persons were Mrs. G.V. Ferguson, R.T. McKenzie, R.E.G. Davis and R.B. Inch.

Most important, however, was that "Of Things To Come" functioned primarily as an instrument of information whereas, the thought of those planning the C.A.A.E. reconstruction project had evolved "from thinking of it as a purely informational and learning programme, with groups discussing the topics in outline for the sake of getting information, to thinking of it as also an action programme, with broadcasts themselves related to specific undertakings, many of them already begun in the direction of community reconstruction--such things as public works, town planning, health, education. This practical emphasis was made a number of times, it being urged that even the international topics should be related, as many of them are, to practical problems in Canadian communities".[5]

Clearly, the committee organizers were being strongly influenced by the early successes experienced by Farm Radio Forum in setting out their objectives. But it would be, as clearly, incorrect to cite the Farm Forum experience as the only motivator responsible for the introduction of a practical bias in formulating their objectives. All of these individuals were experienced and tried adult educationists and were well aware that the

[5] Avison, "Letter to E.A. Corbett, 28 July 1943" Citizens Forum (1942-43), Toronto: The CAAE Archives.

oral dialectic, of which the type of programme they were urging was a part, was a mode of communication whose central feature was 'openendedness' -- a feature which can often prove to be a narcotic to change and reconstruction. And reconstruction, afterall, whether spiritual or material, must remain meaningless apart from the change it occasions in the behaviour of men.[6] It was, then, to make purposeful and to provide direction to the 'openendness' that it was felt would be experienced by the programme audience that the practical bias was introduced into the formulation of the programme's objectives.

Financial Difficulties

Although the formulation of a set of objectives for the programme was done with a clear mind by the organizing committee, it was less clear to them how the project would be financed. Grants had been solicited from many agencies, among which were the Wartime Information Board and the Canadian Institute for International Affairs. However, the grants were never realized. The C.I.I.A. felt that such a project "would be a radical departure from tradition and the terms of reference of the organization, to promote or share in public debate of controversial questions, and thus the plan for joint sponsorship with the C.I.I.A. fell through."[7] The history of why the grant solicited through the Wartime Information Board was not made is confused. The application for the grant was made through the Canadian Council of Education on Citizenship and was prepared by D.W. Buchanan and John Grierson --"the matter was seen as very urgent, because the broadcasts would have to begin in October. Mr. Grierson said it would be necessary for the C.C.E.C. and the C.B.C. to promise that they would carry out the plan; then the W.I.B. could put up the money ... Mr. Grierson pointed out that the programme in question would be seen by the W.I.B. as part of a larger programme of education for post-war reconstruction"[8] All precautions were taken to insure that the grant would be made. The C.C.E.C. affirmed support for the proposed programme and as a measure of good faith, and one that was badly needed by the way set aside $1,000. for the organization of the September Conference. For its part, the C.B.C. had already endorsed the programme and "plans were made for co-operation between the

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[6] This awareness differs from those responsible for creating and directing Farm Radio Forum in so far as there was some question as to whether the type of programme the CAAE was urging, broadly defined as public affairs, would lend itself to the introduction of a practical bias. Whereas the Farm Forum series was never meant to have anything other than a practical bias which, simply put, was to help the Canadian farmer become a better farmer.

[7] Corbett, p. 168.

[8] "The Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship, Executive Meeting, 19 June 1943." Citizens Forum (1942-43) Toronto: The CAAE Archives, pp.8-9.

C.A.A.E. and the C.B.C. in the formation of listening groups for the reconstruction broadcasts."[9] Moreover, the bearer of a memo dated 20 January 1943 indicates that the W.I.B. had heartily approved of the radio series "Of Things To Come" -- a programme which was topically identical to the one being proposed by the C.A.A.E. This memo made by a C.B.C. programme Liaison Officer, read: "from a discussion at yesterday's meeting of the Interdepartmental Committee, it would appear that we have chosen an appropriate time for the series on reconstruction ... W.I.B. are urging the government to give some guidance and encouragement to public thinking and discussion of these matters as a main propaganda job for the next three or four months. Surveys initiated by Mr. Davidson Dunton indicate a widespread interest in these matters."[10] Then just when the promise of the grant requested from the W.I.B. seemed about to be made the committee was informed that it had been denied. Many reasons have been put forward as to why the grant was not made -- all are vague allusions to government interference -- but few of them can be documented.[11] The organizing committee, as might be supposed, was very disappointed. Compounding this disappointment was the realization that the lack of funds would hinder the efforts of the C.A.A.E. in organizing listening groups for the broadcasts by making it impossible to employ the number of field organizers such a job warranted. Also the arrangements made to provide study material for the groups had bogged down and there were serious misgivings at this point as to whether the mid-October deadline set for the airing of the programme was a feasible one. Fortunately, however, the $1,000. granted by the C.C.E.C. towards defraying the cost of the September Conference had at least, made the project financially viable until that time.

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[9] Of Things to Come, p. 1.

[10] Of Things to Come, p.1.

The Programme Takes Shape

Although the lack of funds for the broadcast had created some anxiety within the ranks of the organizing committee, the response to the project made by the various individuals and organization contacted by the committee

[11] In a letter to Watson Thomson of the University of Manitoba dated August 1943, H.R.C. Avison stated, "If you have had some anxiety about the whole project, so have the rest of us. Just when the promise of a grant of $25,000 from the W.I.B. seemed about to be fulfilled, a couple of reactionaries in the Government heard of the scheme, took it to the Prime Minister, and, along with two or three other of John Grierson's favourite plans, ours was scotched. As you can imagine, this was disappointing to us, but it was provoking to several members of the W.I.B. who had been working on it." Citizens Forum (1942-43) Toronto: The CAAE Archives.

was encouraging. To Avison and his committee this response demonstrated "beyond a doubt that the scheme was well conceived."[12] and it reminded Avison that "at this very critical moment in our history, there is held out to us an opportunity for public education greater than we have ever had before."[13]

The interest displayed in the responses received from those contacted by the committee was viewed as being a major strength and one that would be crucial to the success of the up coming conference at Macdonald College in September on which the entire future of the reconstruction programme depended. It was suggested that while the initial interest in the programme was substantial it could not be assumed that its intensity would be sustained. Therefore, it was decided that the "timeliness and necessity of the type of programme" being proposed should be emphasized and that a challenging and inspirational talk was needed "which would send the people at the conference back to their own communities and organizations to do the job" required of them.[14] This, in turn, would make it necessary to provide the conferee's with information concerning "some techniques and methods of adult education and ... with some of the achievements of adult education on this continent."[15] It was felt that the provision of this resource would give the interest already shown by the conferees a positive orientation and enable them to deal more effectively with such things as group organization.

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[12] Avison, "Letter to Watson Thomson, 6 August 1943," Citizens Forum (1942-43). Toronto: The CAAE Archives.

[13] Avison, "Letter to Dr. J.S. Thomson, 28 July 1943," Citizens Forum (1942-43). Toronto: The CAAE Archives.

[14] Avison, "Letter to E.A. Corbett, 28 July 1943," Citizens Forum (1942-43), Toronto: The CAAE Archives.

Meanwhile, the programme began to take a definite shape. It was felt that the organization of the programme had been, generally speaking, a 'top-down' affair and that this was not satisfactory. Therefore, it was decided that the Conference should be divided into two parts. The first, spread out over the conference period, would be a series of talks designed to challenge and inform the delegates of the need for a reconstruction program and the involvement required of them for its implementation. Secondly, if the attending agencies and individuals were to be given the feeling that they were participating in the programme's organization, it would be necessary to provide them with a platform for discussion. To facilitate this task, three commissions were set up; one on 'methods', one on organization and the last on curriculum. The body of the delegates was to be divided among these commissions and the details for the proposed programme were to be decided by them. Discussion leaders and speakers were then chosen and the invitations for the conference were sent out.

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[15] Avison, "Letter to E.A.Corbett, 28 July 1943," Citizens Forum (1942-43), Toronto: The CAAE Archives.

The Macdonald Conference[16]

On the opening day of the Conference, 135 delegates registered, representing many walks of life and every Province in the Nation.[17] What they would be asked to do was summed up best in the opening statement made by Dr. J.S. Thompson, General Manager of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation:[18]

> Under a certain sense of desperation and yet persuaded of new possibility waiting to be born, we meet. We realize to the full that in all talk of a new world, there is one very plain fact - the world will only be made by the people who live in it. The pattern of life will be created by the minds of men. If the world of hope and dream is to become a reality, it must become the object of desire and achievement. That involves great changes, almost a moral and intellectual revolution for many. And the time is short ...
>
> To-day civilization has almost been destroyed by its own achievements. We have mastered our physical environment, but so far we have found it impossible to live with ourselves ...
>
> Science in itself does nothing at all. Science is simply the united competence of intelligent men to understand the ways of nature

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[16] The Conference dates were September 10-11,1943.

[17] See Conference Statistics, p.53.

[18] J.S. Thomson, "The Opening Address, Macdonald College, September 1943," Citizens Forum (1942-43), Toronto: The CAAE Archives, p.3.

FIGURE I

CONFERENCE STATISTICS*

Total Registration - 135
Speakers & Staff - 6

By PROVINCES

British Columbia - 2
Alberta - 3
Saskatchewan - 3
Manitoba - 1
Ontario - 47
Quebec - 72
New Brunswick - 3
Nova Scotia - 4 135

By ORGANIZATIONS

Education - 35
Business & Professional - 24
Religious - 16
Labor - 9
Rural - 8
Military - 16
Miscellaneous - 27 135

*Source: Statistics compiled by the Organizing Committee for the Macdonald College Conference. See Citizens' Forum (1942-43), Toronto: The CAAE Archives.

> and to manipulate our environment for whatever purposes we devise ...
>
> The proposal now before us is to take one part of this apparatus that has been singularly powerful in mass persuasion and make it an instrument for concerted action. I mean, of course the apparatus of broadcasting.

It appears that the 'concerted action' urged by Dr. Thompson was favourably received for when the reports of the three commissions were made in plenary session at the Conference, they were unanimously adopted. However, the findings of the Commissions were by no means extensive. Indeed, they were largely an affirmation of plans and thought that had already been enunciated by the Organizing Committee under Avison. This, of course, is as one might have suspected from a large group of individuals meeting for the first time about such a vast undertaking, especially, if one considers the short period of time allotted them.

Serious attempts were made at the conference to provide the proposed programme with some forms of provincial organization and for the most part, Departments of Education and University Extension fell heir to this function. At the same time, it was recommended that the steps necessary for the organization of Provincial Adult Education and Community Councils be taken so that eventually the regional administration of the programme could be taken over by them. At the national level, the C.A.A.E., C.B.C. and C.I.I.A. were involved with the administration of the programme and a National Advisory Council was set up to oversee programme policy. The C.A.A.E. was made responsible for organizing listening groups, co-ordinating the over-all programme and in co-operation with the C.I.I.A. who were asked to aid in researching programme topics, providing and distributing study material. The C.B.C., of course, was to produce the programme.

Morley Callaghan was invited to chair the programme which, it was decided, should be called "Of Things To Come - A Citizens' Forum", thereby maintaining continuity with the radio series on reconstruction aired the previous season by the C.B.C. and identifying the new programme as one involving citizen participation. Callaghan was a particularly fortunate choice as the programme's host. He was well known to both the Canadian reading and listening audiences and, as he had demonstrated as the host of "Of Things To Come" could maintain the most lively and entertaining of discussions even when hampered by the wartime security measure of employing scripted programmes.

The appointment of Callaghan, and the eager response of those who had attended the Macdonald Conference provided the project with its first notes of optimism. However, in submitting a list of programme topics and speakers for the necessary clearance by the government "violent exception was taken by two prominent Liberal members to several of the speakers from the opposition parties whose names were on the list. The feeling in the matter became so violent that one member of the Mackenzie King Cabinet announced that the C.B.C. would not be permitted to proceed with the programme."[19] Corbett who was in Winnipeg at that time promoting the reconstruction programme, was immediately informed of the devasting news and he relates,

> the next morning I went to the Winnipeg Free Press and discussed the matter with the editors, G.V. Ferguson and Dr. J.W. Dafoe. I remember that Dr. Dafoe ran his fingers through his tousled hair and then said 'Edward, my boy, this makes my trigger finger itch.' He called Grant, Dexter, then the Free Press representative in Ottawa, asked him to get the details of the story and call him back. The next day there was an article in the Free Press attacking the King Government for interference with the C.B.C., and shortly afterward Dr. S. Frigon, General Manager of the C.B.C., gave a statement to the press in which he declared that the programme would go on as originally planned.[20] Thus for the second time,[21] we were successful - thanks to the press, in defeating an attempt to restrict the freedom of the C.B.C."[22]

[19] Corbett, p. 171.

[20] The first broadcast was to be aired 23 November 1943.

[21] See p. 20.

[22] Corbett, pp. 171-172.

CHAPTER V

THE FORUM STRUCTURE

Clearly, the origins of 'Citizens' Forum' differed markedly from its sister programme, 'Farm Forum' whose early history was largely one experimentation and evaluation of the efficacy of the radio study group. The problems faced by those responsible for setting-up Citizens' Forum were, for the most part, ones having to do with matters of communications and organization. For the citizen unlike the farmer is a nebulous character not identifiable by his occupation, residence or economic status; having only his identity as a citizen in common with the whole citizenry. He is known variously as a tax payer, a voter or, perhaps a countryman, all of which are equally faceless terms. His only rallying point is the concern which, unconsciously or consciously he shares with others of his kind for the well being of the nation. Most important he has never had ready access to a platform of an on-going nature which would encourage him to scrutinize and develop the concern for citizenship which makes him a brother to his fellow-countrymen. But just as radio had made the provision of such a platform technically feasible those responsible for establishing

Citizens' Forum attempted to provide the organizational outlet which would make participating citizenship humanly possible. Such an unprecedented action was bound to be fraught with organizational difficulties for the concern and audience about which Citizens' Forum attempted to organize were simply too nebulous. The problems confronting the 'citizen fourmers', then,were two. Firstly, it was imperative that they reach the Canadian Citizen and instill in him an awareness of the political, economic and social issues of the day and times to come. Secondly, it was necessary that the concern created in the citizen for the present and future be not frustrated but encouraged by providing a platform upon which his points of view could be freely and rationally expressed. The resolution of both these problems depended in large measure upon the quality and sensitivity of the communications system that could be sustained by the organizational structure of the forum, and the efficacy of the Forum programmers in employing the vehicles of their thought -- the radio broadcast and the study pamphlet.

A Joint Project

In attempting to furnish Citizens' Forum with a flexible and sensitive organizational structure, the successful experience of the Farm Forum organizers immediately suggested itself. Indeed, the reader will have undoubtedly realized by now that many of those responsible for initiating the Farm Forum broadcasts also were instrumental in the setting up of Citizens' Forum. Hence it was not unnatural that the formal structure of Citizens' Forum was fashioned after the Farm Radio Forum project.

The primary responsibility for planning and organizing was shared by the two founding institutions - the C.A.A.E. and the C.B.C. and, although these organizations worked co-operatively in all parts of the project, each presided over a distinct area of programme jurisdiction. The C.B.C. provided for the broadcasting facilities, production costs, programme publicity and, of course, air time. The C.A.A.E. and other co-operating educational associations assumed the responsibility for preparing and distributing study materials, organizing listening groups and supervising their activities. This division in responsibilities firmly acknowledged that the business of the C.B.C. was broadcasting and conversely, that the business of the co-operating educational bodies was providing and diseminating information in an efficient, effective and organized manner. Thus while each of the founding enterprises maintained a functional sovereignity, the over-all success of the programme demanded that an intimate and co-operative working relationship be sustained.

Certainly, during Forum's early years in any event the close personal relationships that existed between broadcasters and adult educators fostered the sort of trust atmosphere that made such a working relationship possible. Indeed, "Citizens' Forum really built on this relationship. The two groups had similar aims and talked the same language. There was even much overlapping between the two fields. Neil Morrison, Frank Peers, Arthur Stinson--deeply involved in the broadcast aspect of the Forum--were originally in some form of adult education. And there were others. Sympathy and compatibility of interest united the C.A.A.E. and C.B.C. through all the early days."[1]

Organization at the National Level

Nationally, the Forum was administered and planned by a National Liasion Executive Committee (first known as the Joint Executive Committee) consisting of three members appointed by the C.B.C., three members appointed by the C.A.A.E. and a chairman chosen from among these six "to undertake the co-ordination and direction and financing of the project."[2] At the same time, it was suggested that some form of advisory council was needed at the national level to "serve in a consultative and advisory capacity to the joint executive Committee, thus guaranteeing the independence of the project and impartiality and fair balance in such things as selection of topics and speakers and in the presentation of facts and opinions."[3] The number on this council was not to exceed thirty of whom eighteen were to be appointed by the nine Provincial Citizens' Forum Committees and twelve were to be nominated by the Joint Executive Committee -- appointments being made by the C.A.A.E. in consultation with the C.B.C.

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[1] Isabel Wilson, Notes Received in Criticism of Draft Manuscript (1 November 1968), in the possession of the author, Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, p. 1 --hereafter cited as Wilson MS.

[2] "Commission on Organization and Finance," Citizens' Forum (1943-44), Toronto: The CAAE Archives, p. 6.

The idea of supplying the Citizens' Forum project with an Advisory Council which was representative of the regions participating in the programme was, at first sight, a sound one. However, the regional diversity of the membership was such that it was limiting to its potential contribution and the Council never really fulfilled the purpose for which it was established. Some attempts were made to consult through the mail but this practice was given up for it was an agonizingly slow procedure and inhibited, if anything, the decision making process. As time wore on, there were fewer and fewer demands made upon the Advisory Council and eventually, its capacity as a consultative and advisory body gave way to the diminished status of a national figurehead.

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[3] "Commission on Organization and Finance," Citizens' Forum (1943-44), Toronto: The CAAE Archives, p.6.

The National Liaison Executive Committee was also having its share of problems. All the Committee members had established interests and commitments apart from their Citizens' Forum activities and were finding it increasingly difficult to set aside appropriate time blocks to meet the rigorous demands being made on them as the executive authority of the Forum. It soon became clear to all concerned that some reorganization at the national level would have to take place. This reorganization came at the end of the 1950-51 season and involved both the dissolution of the National Liaison Executive Committee and the revitalization of the National Advisory Council. The authority for the administration of programme policy formerly held by the Joint Executive was left to a committee of staff members drawn from the ranks of the C.B.C. and C.A.A.E. In addition, important policy decisions concerning the programme were to be made in conference with representatives of the provincial offices and interested forum members. Similarly, the re-organization of the National Advisory Council involved a change in personnel. The attempt to organize its membership around the principle of regional representation was modified. The new Advisory Council or rather National Advisory Board as it was called after reorganization, was to draw its membership from a variety of nationally based organizations.[4] Such a membership provided ready access to regional opinion markets and holders through their district offices and community interest groups. At the same time, frequent consultation and meetings were made possible by drawing the active membership of the Board from the Toronto-based offices of the organizations. However, it should be noted that the Board's members did not act as official representatives of their parent organization, but were appointed in regard to their individual merits, although, undoubtedly, the thought that led to their appointment was that they would be representative of many national and international interests and that the advice given by them would reflect those interests.

Much of the credit for maintaining the vitality of Citizens' Forum during this early and somewhat, disorganized period, must be given to the staff of the National Office. For the infrequent meetings of the National Liaison Executive Committee and impotence of the National Advisory Council placed an unusually heavy administrative burden upon the staff, at a time when their energies were already being taxed by matters having to do with the preparation and distribution of study material and the development and organization of the project as a whole.

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[4] Some of the organizations having representation on the Board were:- The National Federation of Home and School Associations; The Canadian Council of Churches; The Canadian Council of Women; The Canadian Association of Consumers; Canadian Congress of Labour; Canadian Chamber of Commerce; Trades and Labour Congress of Canada; and The Canadian Manufacturers Association. See generally the annual reports of the CAAE on Citizens' Forum (1950-51/ 1962-63).

The Office was established in the summer of 1944 for the purpose of implementing the policy decisions made by the Executive Committee and co-ordinating the project on a national scale. Its functions were similar to those of Farm Forum's National Office, and were, apart from those already mentioned above.[5]

- to advise and assist the provincial offices,
- to cooperate with other national educational agencies,
- to act as a clearing house for the exchange of experience between the various provinces,
- to channel reactions and suggestions of groups, re broadcasts, to the CBC for their guidance - helping the CBC to keep in touch with listeners.

The consistently high quality leadership and programme materials provided by the National Office for the Citizens' Forum project cannot be overemphasized. The Office was staffed by a National and a Publications Secretary and, excepting for a short period in which the salary of the Publications Secretary was underwritten by the C.C.E.C., the office was financed by the C.A.A.E. Apart from the obvious areas of responsibility denoted by their titles, it is difficult to assign specific jurisdictions to the staff members for the tasks undertaken by the Office were shared co-operatively. Indeed, Mrs. Isabel Wilson, the first Publications Secretary, took on the duties of both the National and Publication Secretariat in 1949 and continued to function in this capacity until the mid-1960's, at which time Citizens' Forum was replaced by "The Sixties" as the C.B.C.'s chief public affairs programme.

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[5] "Commission on Organization and Finance" (1943-44), p.6.

Organization at the Provincial Level

Provincially, the responsibility for the Citizens' Forum project was vested mainly in Departments of University Extension and Education, and Adult Education Councils. Unlike their Farm Forum counterparts, however, the Federations and Departments of Agriculture, among others, these institutions never looked upon the Citizens' Forum project as an integrated part of their overall programs. And although the project was given official sanction, it was really as individuals within these institutions that the provincial committees and secretaries responded to the Forum and took on the duties required of them. Duties, which apart from the function of forum organizers to which they fell heir, involved organizing, administering and implementing Forum policy; maintaining open channels of communication between the community forums and the National

Office as well as satisfying the demand being placed on them by their employers. Clearly the burden placed on the provincial offices was great. For however dedicated, the provincial secretaries and committee members could not satisfy demands, which required their complete attention, on a part-time basis. Yet it was realized from the inception that if Forum was to continue and develop as it was first intended that much would depend upon the success of the provincial offices in organizing discussion groups, or 'forums', as they were called. For it was through the individual forums, in discussion, that the sovereignty and co-operative participation of the citizen could be acknowledged and encouraged. However, this realization was never really brought to fruition. The formation of discussion groups was a rigorous process; they did not just set themselves up. Trained leaders and organizers, well versed in the processes of group dynamics were needed. This meant one of two things, either employing a number of field men, through their provincial offices, who were competent in the fields of group organization and leadership, and sending them out to organize the communities served by the Forum; or, it meant, finding capable workers already within the provincial organizations to seek out and train promising citizens in the techniques of effective group leadership and discussion. The former alternative, to engage trained field men as group organizers, had been used effectively by the Farm Forum organization and was by far the more suitable one, but the financial outlay required to underwrite the activities of such a task force was beyond the means of the sponsors of Citizens' Forum. Thus necessity dictated choosing the latter alternative, which although financially possible, was ridden with annoyances and difficulties. The enormity of the task and, perhaps, futility and disappointment facing those who were involved with the organization of the forums was clearly stated in 1945 by George Grant, Citizens' Forum's first National Secretary. He begins by citing an example of what he considers proper organizational method:[6]

> .... the Film Board, in their new scheme of promoting film committees in urban areas, send 3 or 4 people into a community to get it organized. We have tried to run Citizens Forum with practically none of that active organizing work. Our provincial secretaries, most of whom are doing other jobs at the same time, have to spend most of their time at one central point in their provinces. In the big provinces, particularly, they can't touch more than a tiny segment in any kind of a proper organizational method. In the Maritimes ... we are hoping to organize Citizens Forum on the bases of several people's part time interest ... In Ontario we have hoped to organize an enormous province with one person ... In the Prairies and British Columbia we have hoped to get Citizens Forum really going through people and Departments of Extension who are carrying out work in other projects at the same time and cannot do a thorough organizing job. Several of the western Departments of Extension who are carrying our programme have said that because of pressure of

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[6] George Grant, "Submission to the National Liaison Executive Committee, 9 March 1945," Citizens' Forum (1944-45), Toronto: The CAAE Archives, pp. 1-2.

> regular work they have been able to do no travelling or organization.
>
> If a really good programme of urban discussion or the problems of our citizens is to develop, we can only expect it to be a success if we put sufficient leaders into the field ... without those leaders we can expect to be always disappointed.

It is difficult to say whether the disappointment to which Grant alludes above ever affected the operation of the Citizens' Forum project in any significant manner. Certainly, as mentioned above, the fragile status of the Forum's finances was never able to support the trained field-leadership urged by Grant, or were the provincial offices of Citizens' Forum ever able to devote the necessary time to group organization. Thus, it is not surprising to find that the number of active forums diminished progressively following the Forum's second broadcasting season.[7] This trend seriously affected Forum's provincial offices and, eventually, the programme as a whole. The liaison the provinces maintained with the forums and the findings that resulted from this liaison, which were communicated in weekly and year-end summaries to the National Office, played a large part in the planning of the programme and provided a convenient outlet for citizen opinion. And, indeed, the viability of the provincial offices rested largely in their ability to provide efficient liaison services within the Citizens' Forum organization. However as time passed on, so did the liaison function which sustained the provincial offices. For as the number of active forums gradually diminished it became increasingly difficult and ultimately impossible for the provincial secretaries to prepare adequate summaries on the small volume of material received from the forums. Subsequently, the National Office assumed the responsibility for the entire Forum programme, and few demands were ever made of the provinces following the 1957-58 season.

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[7] During the first year Forum operated there were 1215 active forums. This number fell to 800 during the second year; 462 during the third year; and 407 during the fourth year. Following the 1946-47 season the number of active forums remained relatively constant, ±400. Then towards the end of the 1951-52 season this figure dropped to +300 and by the end of the 1957-58 series had fallen to an all time low of 70 groups. During the first two seasons there were also +200 armed service forums in operation.

CHAPTER VI

THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

The Broadcast

We have already seen that the formal structure given Citizens' Forum fell somewhat short of the planners expectations of it as an appliance sensitive to and hence, encouraging of citizen's opinion. However, a clearer perception of the problems facing Citizens' Forum in adapting to so nebulous an entity as 'the citizen' may be obtained from an examination of the tools employed by the programme's planners to create and sustain an informed and action-minded citizenry. In approaching this topic perhaps we should begin by first taking a look at the Citizens' Forum broadcasts themselves.

Citizens' Forum began as half hour studio broadcast under the chairmanship of Morley Callaghan. From its inception, attempts were made to vary the points of the programmes origination as much as possible for it was felt that this practice would not only publicize the programme, but would demonstrate the Forum's concern for the people of the various towns and cities from which the broadcasts were made.[1] There were generally speaking, between 20 and 30 broadcasts made during the radio season and of these, one or two were introductory, being composed of a number of short talks by well known and knowledgeable persons concerning important issues that Canadians would have to come to terms with in the oncoming year. Similarly, there were two or three National Report Broadcasts aired annually, each of which was prepared from the summaries of the forum findings made by the provincial secretaries and the various questions that had arisen, but had remained unanswered from the discussion broadcasts preceeding the Report. These broadcasts were appropriately entitled "What the People Say."

The broadcast, in the beginning at least, was thirty minutes in length, twenty-five of which were on the national air waves. For the last five minutes, the national network was broken and the programme was taken over by the provincial secretaries who reported on the activities of the forums under their jurisdiction.

The War Years

During the first few seasons, the war years, censorship restrictions made it necessary to employ scrip-

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[1] See Charts I - II, p. 72.

CHART I*

Points of Origin 1944-45 through 1957-58 by close approximation of percentages, in cities.

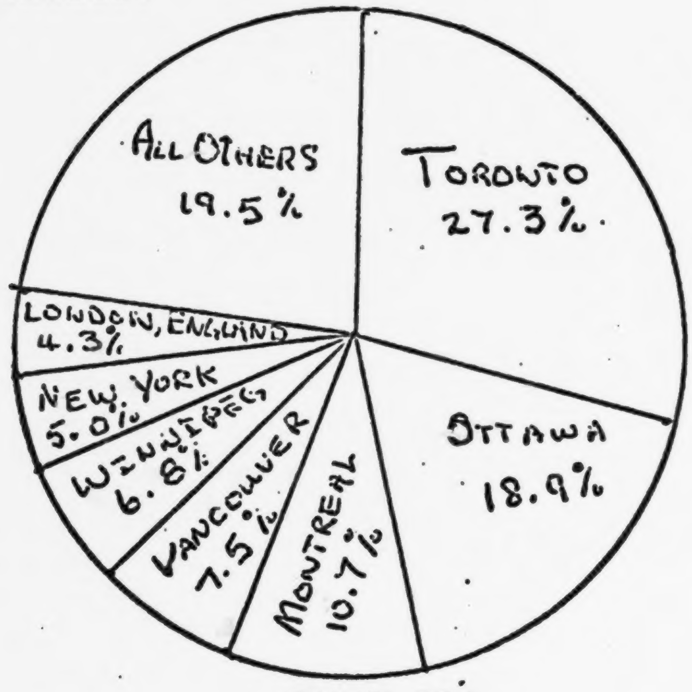
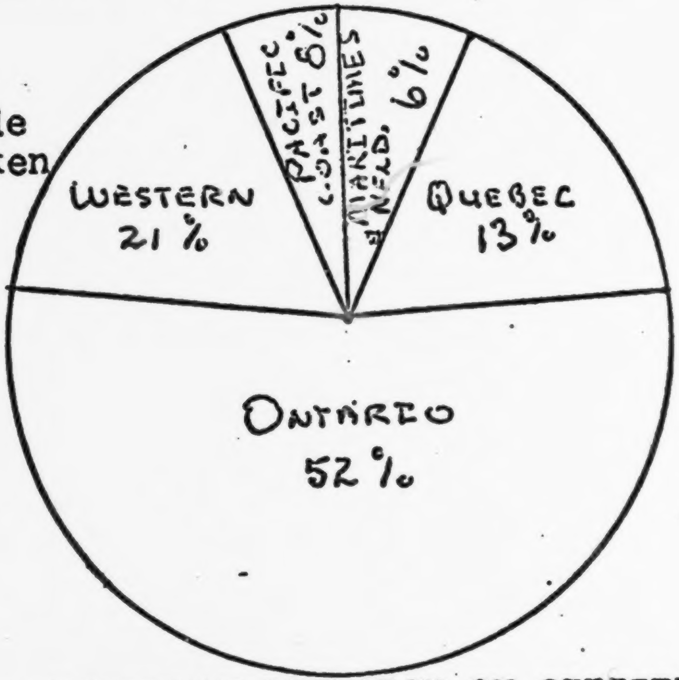


CHART II*

Points of Origin 1944-45 through 1957-58 by close approximation of percentages, regionally.

(Points outside Canada not taken into account)



*Source: THE BANNERMAN RESEARCH ON CITIZENS' FORUM - Contained in the CAAE Archives on Citizens' Forum. A number count of points of origin reported in the CAAE's Annual Reports on Citizens' Forum. The years surveyed are typical ones.

ted broadcasts which were prepared by Mr. Callaghan.[2] He, together with John Fisher, the producer of the programme, travelled extensively throughout Canada meeting and acquainting panelists with procedural matters having to do with a scripted programme. Usually they would meet with the panelists, who had hopefully already received the study material prepared for them by the C.A.A.E., three days prior to the actual broadcast. In the first meeting viewpoints were informally exchanged and tentative agreement as to the terms of reference within which the discussion would proceed was made. These views were then expanded upon and given clearer definition, following which a draft script was prepared and revised, if necessary. Finally, the chairman and panelists moved into rehearsal which usually lasted about six-hours; last minute revisions were then made and the broadcast aired. Clearly the process was an exhausting one and there was always the fear that the spirit of the discussion would stagnate before air time, but fortunately this was a rare occurrence and the programmes were favourably received by the listening public from the first. Much of the

[2] Mrs. Tannis Prendergast, formerly of the C.B.C.'s "Department of Talks and Public Affairs," and one time member of the National Liaison Executive Committee (1944/45-1946/47) can not recall any manner of interference because of censorship restrictions or did wartime regulation unduly bias the programming of Citizens' Forum. Opinions solicited in conversation with Mrs. Prendergast, Isabell Wilson of the CAAE and D.P. Armstrong of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto: At the CAAE, 5 May 1968.

credit for sustaining the spirit and freshness of these early programmes must be given to Morley Callaghan who, by assuming the role of provocateur and was able to create a facade which approximated spontaneous discussion.

Some Innovations

Following the Peace in 1945, the practice of employing prepared scripts was discontinued. The need to provide the programme with a "chairman-provocateur" diminished and it was generally felt that a "chairman-moderator" would serve the Forum best in the future. For there were many who thought that the show or entertainment aspect of the broadcasts had been weighted too heavily and that the process of learning through informed discussion was subsequently, not being given the necessary emphasis. This feeling led to the abandonment of the professional chairmanship of the Forum broadcasts and from the outset of the 1945-46 radio series the chairmanship was granted on a temporary basis.

At the same time, the programme had come under some criticism for its lack of detail and in-depth treatment of subjects. The Forum's planners reacted to this criticism by suggesting that the 30 minute broadcast period be extended to 45 minutes, thus facilitating the more extensive coverage of topics desired by some groups. Nevertheless, it was recognized "that a longer program might cut down the time groups would give to their own discussions, and might tend to overemphasize the importance of the broadcast in the total scheme".[3] Ultimately the question was put to the listening groups who responded with a resounding - yes! The mandate received from the Forum audience was acted upon and the programme was extended to 45 minutes during the 1947-48 season. This of course, made a change in format necessary, and it was suggested that the broadcasts be broken down into four time segments:[4]

1) 12 minutes consisting of introductory statements outlining the various positions of the panelists on the evening's subject.

2) 15-18 minutes devoted to questions and discussion among panelists.

3) 10-12 minutes answering questions sent in by listening groups from across the country or from a live audience.

4) 5 minute provincial reports for which the national network was broken.

The rationale behind the new format is clear. The first period of introductory statements was meant to serve as a

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[3] Isabel Wilson, A Report on Citizens' Forum: Canada's National Platform, Toronto: CAAE, n.d., p. 6.--hereafter cited as Wilson.

[4] "Draft Proposal for Citizens' Forum, 1947-48." Citizens' Forum 1947-48, Toronto: The CAAE Archives, p.1.

"warm-up", as it were, and further, it served to focus the listeners attention on the subject by providing the dimensions within which the discussion would proceed. The second time period of intra-panel questioning and discussion was designed as a device whereby the validity of the viewpoints initially expressed might be tested. Most important were the questions directed at the panel from the floor. For they served to clarify and bring the subject under discussion closer home to the listeners,[5] and this after all was one of the primary objectives of the programme. The five minute provincial report served, as it always had, to provide the listening audience with an opportunity for participating through the free expression of their points of view.

The question period, or perhaps, more broadly, those broadcasts which were made from a public meeting and involved questions from a 'live audience' were commonly looked forward to with eagerness. There were some among the listening audience, however, who felt that the question period, whether given over to a live audience or a tutored audience within broadcast studio, was detrimental to the programme. Generally speaking, they regarded the questions asked by persons from the floor as an amateur intrusion and imposition upon the so called expertise of the panel members. This criticism, although the

[5] See Wilson, p. 7.

expression of a small minority, was not without foundation. For the questions directed at the panel were, at times, vague and ambigious and tended to be unidimensional in that the audience often addressed itself to the positions held by the various panel members and seldom initiated sentiments or ideas which had not already been expressed. Although the criticism directed at the question period was known to be a valid one by the Forum organizers and planners, it was also understood that the period "had a function in creating the feeling that the average man had a chance to make his voice heard."[6] At the same time, it was agreed that techniques for improving the question period should be investigated - and so they were.

Employing the panel discussion as the staple item of the Citizens' Forums broadcasts, questions have been brought forward through the hidden panel technique. This involved the selection of a number of interested and knowledgeable persons, usually a small number, who located in an isolated studio, would listen and make note of the major points raised in the panel discussion. Following the discussion or at a time deemed appropriate by the Chairman, the isolated studio panel would be cut in to the national network and a two way discussion would take place over the questions put to the main panel. The advantage that issued from this technique was that the inquisitors could be chosen from any part of the country or be representative of special interest groups and thus were able to speak to national or international issues on the basis of regional or specialized interest. Sometimes when the topic to be discussed was of a particularly controversial nature or not specifically related to a special interest group, the question period was dropped and the entire broadcast was given over to a panel of experts. On other occasions, when controversial subjects were aired "questions have been brought forward through the interview technique. Individuals of widely different points of view have been questioned by a number of journalists on some topic of current political interest. In one effective broadcast, the Minister of Finance was interviewed on his new budget. Then the opposition's financial critic, who had not heard the first part of the program, was similarly questioned".[7] This last technique will seem familiar to the television viewers of this decade.

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[6] "Citizens' Forum Conference, 26 April 1951," Citizens' Forum 1950-51, Toronto: CAAE Archives, p. 11.

It is rather ironic that the attempts to improve upon the question period - the citizen's platform - marked the beginning of the end of the 'platform' itself. For as a greater number of the seasons broadcasts were given over to interest groups and the professional inquisitors of our era - the newsman and public affairs broadcasters - the amateur status of the "average man" and the questions he posited during the question period became more apparent.

[7] Wilson, p. 7.

It was not long before the majority opinion, which had once favoured the station accorded the voice of the general studio audience during the broadcast, began to shift its regard towards incorporating more professionalism into the programme's question period. This, of course, set into motion a chain of events commonly known as "the vicious circle". As more and more of the listening audience were won over to the expertise displayed by "the professionals" during the question period, fewer and fewer broadcasts were made from public meetings. The trend away from the public meeting broadcasts was an unusual one. For these broadcasts were favourably regarded by the majority of active forums, and indeed, it was only discovered and acknowledged with serious reservation that the changes being made in the programme's format were at one and the same time a reaction to and instigated by a whole "new" listening audience - an audience of individuals. But we shall return to a discussion of this phenomenon later. One further dimension of the broadcast remains to be discussed - the choosing of the panel.

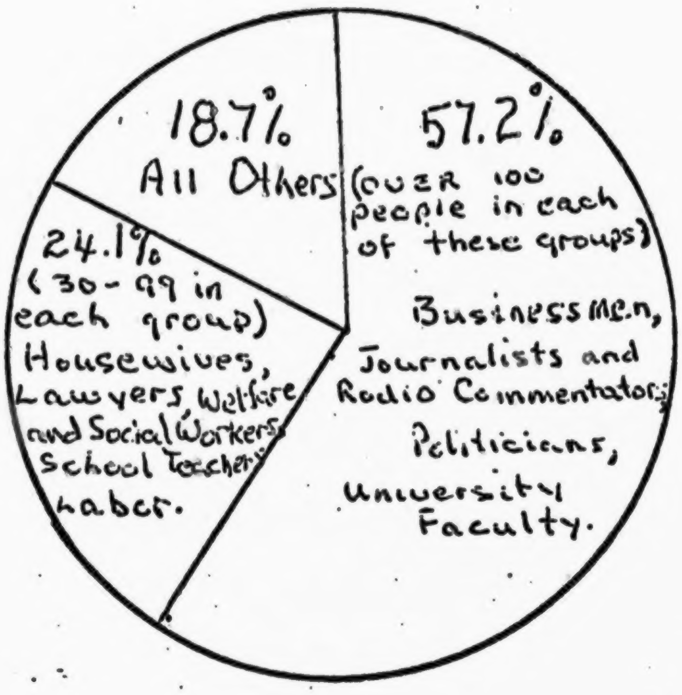
The Panel

Initially, the view was expressed that those asked to participate on the panel "need not be exclusively experts[8]

[8] See Chart III for the types of panelists that served on the Forum shows.

CHART III

Panel Members 1944-45 through 1957-58*



*Source: The Bannerman Research on Citizens' Forum -- Contained in the CAAE Archives on Citizens' Forum. The percentages given are exclusive of panel chairmen and are listed by main occupation. The period surveyed is inclusive of those years in which the panel discussion type of programme was clearly the chief mode of production.

Articulate persons with coherent and well defined views on particular subjects, though they might not qualify as experts, could on many occasions present broadcasts as stimulating and interesting as those in which only experts took part."[9] In practice, however, very few "layman" were asked to participate on the programme. For it was found that the layman - "a person who is not supported by a good deal of information cannot develop the subject through discussion but tends simply to reiterate his conviction".[10] Hence a number of criteria were drawn up which all but eliminated the possibility of lay participation. Some of these criteria were:

(a) Knowledge or experience relating to the topic
(b) Diversity of viewpoint
(c) Voice and microphone personality
(d) Ability to impart information in simple language

Clearly, even a panel of experts would have difficulty in conforming to these criteria and only, seldom, was the ideal, the selection of a truly balanced panel, achieved. An altered viewpoint, an immoderate moderator, or a participant more familiar with broadcasting procedure than his fellow panelists were all factors that could,

[9] "Annual Report of The CAAE on Citizens' Forum," Citizens' Forum 1943-44, Toronto: The CAAE Archives, p.10.

[10] Wilson, p.9.

potentially, create an imbalance in the programme. Attempts were made to include lay panelists on programmes which dealt with community or family matters but, again, it was found that the sentiments expressed by these individuals were, more than often, narrowly regional and this tended to frustrate the smooth operation of the discussion, and, at times, brought accusations of extending regional priviledges against the Forum organization.[11] Hence just as participation in the question period was gradually given over to professional inquisitors, so were the discussion panels made the prerogative of the experts - the only difference being that the need for "expert panelists" was recognized almost immediately.

The selection of panel members was intended to be a co-operative task shared by the two sponsoring bodies. In reality, however, the C.B.C. relied rather heavily upon the CAAE and "its wide contact with various elements of the community"[12] during the early years of the Forum project for aid in selecting the "appropriate people for discussion programmes. Later, of course the C.B.C.

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[11] Although unfounded, the levelling of this criticism is not unnatural, for the CAAE's wide range of community and organizational contacts had as its areas of greatest concentration, Ontario and the Praire Provinces, and subsequently individuals residing within these areas were frequently called upon to serve as panelists on Forum. It was therefore not regional favouritism, but ready and familiar access to prospective panelists that, at times, guided the Forum's planners in selecting panelists.

[12] Wilson Ms., p.1.

developed its own network of relationships and contacts and did not look to the CAAE for advice and support in anything like the old way. It might be said, broadly, that the C.B.C. greatly increased its concern for the program interests of the wide general public and became less interested in establishing and maintaining close connections with voluntary organizations."[13]

Study Materials

From the very beginning of the Citizens' Forum project the need to provide the organized listening groups with background materials was recognized.[14] This material took the form of a small study pamphlet, usually seven or eight pages in length. The pamphlets were "prepared at the National Office and distributed to groups and individual subscribers by the Provincial Offices in advance of the programme covered. Its function was to provide a background of fact and an outline of the conflicting opinions held on the subject. The pamphlet was to support - but not duplicate - the broadcast and give group discussion

[13] Wilson MS., p. 2. This, of course, was a natural occurence, to have direct and intimate contact with the Canadian listening and afterwards viewing audience was always one of the C.B.C.'s primary objectives. Besides the CAAE's area of influence and contact was not really Canada wide. See p. 53, n.18.

[14] See p. 21.

added substance."[15] The guide, itself contained both a major article which gave, in as factual and unbiased a manner as possible, a summary of contemporary opinion concerning the discussion topic; and a reference list which detailed some viewing and reading materials that could be used to supplement the radio broadcasts. Although primarily designed as an informational resource, a number of thought provoking questions were posited at the end of each guide. Often leading and argumentative, these questions served to open up the forum discussions and were especially useful to those forums which were labouring under the handicap of biased or untrained leadership. The questions were additionally beneficial in that they generally formed the basis of the reports made by the forums to their Provincial Offices, and thus, provided a common ground upon which a discussion group could compare and contrast its findings with those of other groups across the country.

Criticism

The study guides were well received and there were few complaints of presenting biased or slanted material, according to the Provincial Offices. It must be remembered, however, that the opinion reflected through the Provinces originated, for the most part, in existing groups of

[15] Wilson MS. p.1.

listeners and did not accurately mirror the growing body of individual listeners who had set themselves up on the programmes' fringe. In actual fact, some aspects of the study guides did come up for rigorous criticism,[16] especially the Report Questions, the formulation of which was always a subject of concern among the programme's planners and organizers. For "the fact that Citizens' Forum members have not a common occupation, or a common set of interests (as in the case of Farm Forum) makes it difficult to frame the question which fits the highest point of concern. Whether a question provokes good discussion or not may depend on the chance composition of the individual group."[17] The criticism that was directed at the Report Question bears out the above statement. There were those who regarded the report questions as intellectually stifling and limiting to their discussion, though, admittedly they were under no compulsion to stick to the questions framed in the study guides. There were also those who felt that the questions were not pointed enough, and perhaps, not as provocative as they might have been. And, of course, there were a number of individ-

[16] Of the critics, none were more rigorous than Mrs. Isabel Wilson who was responsible for preparing the pamphlets over much of programme's run.

[17] Isabel Wilson, "Citizens' Forum, Manuscript submitted for publication in Adult Education in Canada (1950)," Citizens' Forum: Critiques (1943-63), Toronto: The CAAE Archives, p. 6 -- hereafter cited as Citizens' Forum MS.

uals whose lack of understanding prevented them from contributing to a meaningful discussion on the basis of the questions. The most frequently voiced criticism offered by this last group was that too many of the questions could be answered with a simple yes or no.

The strictures levelled at the study guide as a whole, were not as adamant as those directed at the Report Questions. For one thing, there was little on which a critique could be based. The guides were meticulously researched and well written. Nevertheless, there were usually a number of requests received each year urging that the guides be treated in a more precise and succinct manner: "They would like to see the pamphlet confine itself to a brief statement of fact with no attempt at interpretation, and the pros and cons of the question drawn up in simple point form. But those who believe the material is now too 'extensive' are decidedly in the minority and the pamphlets have not been altered radically to meet their views."[18] Occasionally heard was the remark that the information provided in the study guide was not always presented in a "down to earth" manner. This point was frequently raised at Citizens' Forums conferences, but apart from sustaining a rigorous editorial policy, there was really little that could be done about simplifying

[18] Wilson, p. 11.

the presentation. Many of the topics chosen for discussion involved the statement of complex problems and issues and it was difficult to enunciate these complexities in a manner which would be comprehensible to all. Besides, it was felt that the stress created in people who were not familiar with the more formalized, academic style of writing in which some of the material was presented was not an unhealthy stress, and quite in keeping with educational aspects of the programme. Similarily, the stress that was experienced by some of the forums when the treatment given a particular topic on the air differed from the treatment that it was given in the study pamphlet was not felt to be unwelcome. It was reasoned that the different treatments given topics from time to time provided a broader base upon which the forum discussions following the broadcast could take place.

Distribution

The study material was distributed widely throughout Canada[19] and while it was prepared for the use of the

[19] During the first two years of the Forum's operation the weekly issue of pamphlets numbered between 14,000 -16,000. With the Peace and subsequent loss of the numbers distributed among the armed forces this figure fell to 4,000 - 5,000 weekly issues and remained at this level throughout most of Citizens' Forum life. The pamphlets ranged in cost from 2-4 cents per unit in the early days of Forum to a high of 10-25 cents per unit for many of the special expanded issues printed during the late 1950's and early 1960's. The pamphlets were always distributed at cost to subscribers.

forums, many of the individual listening audience and organizations involved with other group programs suscribed to the material or requested orders of special titles. The reception given the pamphlets is not difficult to understand. The subjects treated in the pamphlets were always set in the context of contemporary Canadian society and this was enough to recommend the study material to many responsible citizens and organizations in itself. For, although the Canadian public had never lacked for political or economic commentary, the social context in which politics and economics are set had been woefully neglected by historians and the chroniclers of current events alike. The social commentary provided in the study pamphlets was not surprising for the adult education movement in Canada had always been underwritten with a keen sense of social purpose, and as indicated before, the responsibility for the material contained in the pamphlets rested with the Canadian Association for Adult Education.

Study pamphlets were issued for all the topics scheduled in the broadcast series. In the first few seasons of the Forums operation the pamphlets were prepared by the Publications Secretary in consultation with the National Executive and National Advisory Council. This, however, was a great deal of work for one person to do and eventually, the responsibility for researching and writing the discussion pamphlets were delegated to qualified persons outside the C.B.C. and C.A.A.E. The

National Office, of course, retained its power as editor and the agreements entered into with the various people called upon as writers and researchers were always made with the understanding that the responsibility for the form taken by the finished article rested with the National Office. To avoid factual inaccuracies and to sustain a balance in controversial subjects, before publication the manuscripts were submitted to various outside authorities who had not been consulted during the formulation of the materials. The consultants chosen for this task were drawn from many sectors of Canadian life. And although these consultants were usually "professionals' the information obtained through the provincial offices and the annual questionnaire sent to the forums were given serious consideration--thus ensuring that the lay points of view would be taken into account.

Topic Selection

Similarly the selection of the discussion topics involved extensive consultations with both the listening audience and various outside authorities. Each year a questionnaire was sent out to those who had registered for the Citizens' Forum broadcast, asking among other things, for topic suggestions for the up-coming broadcast season. The registrants were completely free to choose what topics they wished with, however, one stipulation--that the supplied topics be listed under three headings:

(1) international, (2) national and (3) community. Once completed and returned to the National Office, the questionnaires were carefully studied and the responses classified under subject headings.

At the same time, presentations were made to a number of individuals representing among other fields -- industry, education, journalism and politics. These consultants were placed on a permanent list which was added to each year of the Forum's operation. Appointment to the list of consultants, which eventually numbered between 150 and 200 persons, was made in respect to an individual's proficiency in his vocation or profession and to his demonstrated and informed concern for Canada's welfare. As with the broadcast's registrants, the outside consultants were asked to suggest several topics and issues they felt would be of concern and of interest to the Canadian public. The suggestions received from the consultants were then classified under subject headings.

The subject ideas received from both the registrants and consultants were next submitted to a joint committee of the C.B.C. and C.A.A.E. This committee decided "in what general fields the demand appears to be greatest and in what aspect of these subjects there seems to be the most concern. On this basis, a tentative list of some 35 topics is drawn up, and titles worded. Frequency of request is the most important factor in the choice of subjects. But a good deal of judgment must be exercised."[20] For the subject ideas put forward by the registrants tended to reflect those topics which they felt had been most stimulating in the past. And more often than not, the responses of the registrants were vaguely worded. Thus when contrasted with the usually sophisticated suggestions made by the consultants, the committee found it exceedingly difficult in drawing up the list of tentative topics to maintain an acceptable balance between the status quo urged by the Forum's audience and the more forward looking and precise responses made by the outside consultants. This was a very real problem for had the listening audience become disenchanted with the choice of topics, the broadcast would have failed. Conversely, simply maintaining the status quo in subject areas would have done little to attract new listeners whose interests were possibly different from or broader than those of the programme's habitues. Hence, great care was taken to ensure that a balance was maintained between the old and the 'new'.

The tentative list of 35 topics chosen by the joint committee of the C.B.C. and C.A.A.E. was "sent to the consultants, to provincial Citizens' Forum, to members of the National Advisory Board, and to members of the Council of the C.A.A.E."[21] Those receiving the list were asked to mark 16 to 18 of the 35 topics they would most like to hear during the on-coming broadcast season. Also suggestions as to the re-wording of obscure or misleading titles were solicited and given consideration. Once these marked lists were returned to the National Office, the votes were calculated and the final choice of topics was made. Again, however, the choice of subjects was made to balance. For example, if the marked list heavily favoured topics having to do with the community at the expense of the national or the international subject areas, those responsible for the final selection often re-weighted topics so that the final listing was balanced more equitably between the three subject areas. In those cases in which it was thought that a radical departure from the topic emphases provided by the voters was necessary, the advice of the National Advisory Board of Citizens Forum was sought. Thereby, hopefully eliminating any subject bias that might have entered into the decision to redistribute the weight accorded the various subject areas by the voters. Lastly, the topics were grouped thematically and the broadcast dates for each of the programmes was set.

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[20] Wilson, pp. 13-14.

[21] Ibid., p. 14.

The rigorous 'editorializing' and extensive consultations engaged in by the National Office when preparing the study material demanded that a firm subject list be established before the onset of the broadcasting season. At the same time, having a set pre-season list of subjects made it possible "to organize interest around topics ahead of time,"[22] and, indeed, states Mrs. Wilson "our part as originally conceived depended on a margin of time for preparing appropriate materials and for promotion."[23] There was little questioning of this pre-planning period until the early fifties about which time a subtle patter of criticism began to be directed at the programme for its lack of immediacy and topicality by the programme's organizers at the C.B.C. As these critics became more vociferous and greater topicality was introduced into the Forum series it became increasingly difficult for the C.A.A.E. to pre-plan the programme and eventually "last minute topic decisions made the C.A.A.E.'s role in the project almost impossible."[24] Ultimately the role played by the C.A.A.E. was limited to the preparation of pamphlets for various 'specials' organized around a programme segment of three or four broadcasts.

[22] Wilson MS. p.3.

[23] Ibid., p. 3.

[24] Ibid., p. 3. See p. 59 for a description of how the CAAE's role was originally conceived.

CHAPTER VII

SEE IT NOW ON TELEVISION

Initial Considerations

The value of film as an instrument of entertainment has never been seriously questioned. However, it was some time after the introduction of this medium that its educational value was fully recognized by Canadian educators. Similarly, the introduction of television into Canada was recognized first as a mode of entertainment and only secondly as being educationally valuable. Adult educators were among the first Canadian educationists to study this new phenomena in respect to the educational purposes to which it could be put. The C.A.A.E., of course, was foremost among those organizations and had conducted a seminar, together with a number of interested organizations, at the Ryerson Institute, on the possible uses of television as early as August 1953, and shortly afterwards planned a number of institutes for the purposes of spreading information about television.[1]

The speed with which this new medium spread across the country was phenomenal and by 1955 almost 30% of all

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[1] See "Annual Report of the CAAE on Citizens' Forum," Citizens' Forum 1955-56, Toronto: The CAAE Archives.

Canadian households had television and an even greater percentage of Canadianshad viewing priviledges, as all who had friends and relatives among that 30% will remember. Moreover, it soon became clear to even the most casual of observers that the increasing number of darkened parlour windows emitting that erie blue-ish glow meant that the Canadian evening audience which had traditionally been a listening audience, was fast becoming a viewing audience. This, of course, was especially true of urban audiences. Thus it was no marvel that both the C.B.C. and the C.A.A.E. were becoming deeply concerned about the extent to which this new medium was cutting into the Citizens' Forum audience.[2]

The Forum was the corner stone of the C.B.C's public affairs programme and the C.A.A.E. regarded the broadcast, as it had always done, as the most important programme of public education ever undertaken in Canada. However, both of these organizations were convinced that it could not retain the stature it had achieved on radio -- that in the light shed by this new and more popular medium, the authority of radio was bound to wane. Hence[3] "in

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[2] See generally "Annual Report of the CAAE on Citizens' Forum," Citizens' Forum 1954-55, Toronto: the CAAE Archives.

[3] Isabel Wilson, Notes and Queries on Citizens' Forum (n.d.) In the possession of the Author, Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, p.1 --here after cited as Notes and Queries.

> in March of 1955, Roby Kidd [The Director of the CAAE] wrote to F. Alphonse Ouimet presenting this view. He said in part: 'But precisely because Citizens'. Forums is such an important project, an essential service in a democracy as Basil Dean of the Calgary Herald put it, we are interested in its further development in the future. And this, as you know better than anyone else, means television ... My associates in the Canadian Association for Adult Education and our partners in Citizens' Forum work, the university extension departments, all believe that the time has come for telecasting Citizens' Forum. We have given considerable study to this matter and the decision has come about after discussion over a two year period. We realize that several important changes in the program will have to be made. But we are prepared to face these changes because the over-riding fact is the opportunity in television of reaching a sizeable part of the Canadian public with a well-planned consideration of Canada's most vital questions.

Less enthusiastic about putting Citizens' Forum on television were the provinces and the National Advisory Board. Generally speaking, they felt that the changes that would have to be made in the programme to which Roby Kidd referred above would adversely affect the character of the programme. Nevertheless, the position taken by the C.A.A.E. and C.B.C. prevailed and in the autumn of 1955, Citizens' Forum was televised.

The fears initially expressed by those who opposed the televising of Citizens' Forum were soon realized. Programme time was reduced from three quarters of an hour to a half hour and the radio broadcast which was kept but which was simply the audio portion of the television show was reduced to a similar time period. However, audience reaction to the shorter time period was decidedly unfavourable and, although extra programme time was not available for the T.V. show, the radio broadcasts were restored to their former time period of forty-five minutes in 1956.

The extra 15 minutes on the radio portion of the programme was used for the presentation of additional material. On several occasions the additional time was used to answer questions that were submitted by the listening audience in advance of the broadcast. On other occasions the panel discussion was extended to the full forty-five minutes or often the views of a completely different panel would be aired on the nights topic. For example, on one programme during the 1956-57 season a typical Citizens' Forum group in Montreal recorded their discussion following the television broadcast on the "Death Penalty Should Go", and this discussion was aired on the last quarter hour of the radio programme that week.[4] Another innovation and always popular were the 15 minute man-in-the-street interviews that were used to introduce some topics. These seemed to provide the listening audience with the feeling that the Forum was still one with the 'common man'. For a similar reason several of the bonus periods were given over to regional discussion groups and to provincial reporting. The periodical use of the radio bonus time for provincial reports that, traditionally, had been included in the broadcast format, were an impossibility on television. The national television network simply could not be broken for such reports and, as the audio portion of the television programme formed the radio broadcast, provincial reporting of group opinion diminished to a token amount after 1955. This, of course, was the cause of much consternation for it made the already difficult task of maintaining group interest and of organizing new groups, exceedingly more difficult.

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[4] "Annual Report of the CAAE on Citizens' Forum," Citizens' Forum (1956-57), Toronto: The CAAE Archives, p.4.

Television Forums?

Indeed, there were serious doubts in the minds of the Citizens' Forum organizers that the 'forums' around which the programme had been initially organized could be maintained. Neither the Sunday afternoon viewing period[5] alotted the programme or the points of the programme's origin, which were limited to the C.B.C's main production centers, were encouraging to group formation or discussion.[6] Sunday afternoons in Canada have traditionally been reserved

[5] The factor cost in television prevented Citizens' Forum from getting the prime listening time that had previously been given the programme on radio. Prime time was reserved for sponsored programmes.

[6] The radio broadcast which was retained in its traditional Thursday evening time slot after the televising of Forum can best be described as a delaying action, in terms of the organized use of the programme. For it was unable to compete with television for an audience and, hence, was unable to win new adherents or promote the idea of group participation with any great deal of success.

for family get-togethers, visiting with friends or various light recreational activities. Thus the motivation necessary to organize and take part in discussion groups on a Sunday afternoon was seriously lacking. Besides, most television viewers were unaware of the group discussion aspect of the project as the television programme was devoted entirely to the afternoon's topic and there was seldom any time given to the advertisement of the group aspect. The fact that Citizens' Forum could no longer originate in the smaller centers of population across the country had a similar adverse effect on group formation and discussion. In the past, the public broadcast meetings had done much to promote the idea of group participation, and were, in themselves, demonstrations of the importance that was attached to group listening in the overall programme. What was more important, this promotion was done at the community or, if you will, the grass roots level, and most people took this to be an expression of interest which was, generally speaking, reciprocated by those communities in which the programme originated. In an attempt to compensate for this lack of touch or involvement with the organized listening public that seemed to occur after the televising of Forum "studio audiences were [often] used, but these did not take the place of public meetings as a means of programme promotion or of involving a community."[7]

It would be wrong, however, to give the impression that television was singly responsible for the deterioration of the group discussion aspect of the programme. For as we saw earlier,[8] there had never been sufficient funds available to the Forum organizers for underwriting group formation, and all of those responsible for organizing the forums were volunteer workers whose first allegiance was to their employers. Hence it was inevitable that the duties they undertook for the Citizens' Forum project and especially that of group organization, which, if performed effectively, demanded a great deal of time and effort, would suffer. Moreover, the programme was being directed to an audience of which there was only the most generalized knowledge--an audience identifiable and having little other than their role as Canadian citizens in common. This of course, was inhibiting to group formation, for there was no tangible entity about which the groups could be organized. Nor could the urban population, to whom the programme was directed, be expected to commit themselves to an activity which required "at least 25 weeks during the season ... quite a lot of time to give to matters of general concern"[9] especially when viewed against

[7] Notes and Queries, p.7.

[8] See p. 67 ff.

[9] Notes and Queries, p.3.

the background of activities competing for the attention of the city dweller. Hence the languishing of the forums and the virtual abandonment of the listening group aspect of the project that ultimately came about cannot be attributed solely to television. For, as early as the Spring of 1948, serious doubts were being expressed "about the wisdom of continuing Citizens' Forum as it ...[was then] constituted--that is, as primarily a group discussion project."[10] The alternative suggested, however -- to concentrate on encouraging individual and family use of the study material broadcast and, if desired, "develop and entirely new series for group listening"[11]--was felt to be too radical a departure at that time and it was not until the Forums television period that the alternative became, in fact, the modus operandi of the project, even though agreement had been reached some years earlier among the Citizens' Forum planners "that the 'wider use' of the programme was valuable and well worth encouraging."[12]

There is still little agreement among those who had been responsible for administering Citizens' Forum as to whether the group discussion aspect of the programme could have been sustained on television. Isabel Wilson

[10] Douglas Clark, Submission Made to the National Liaison Executive Committee (1948), Citizens' Forum (1947-48), Toronto: the CAAE Archives, p. 5.

[11] Ibid., p..5.

[12] Notes and Queries, p.4.

who was one of the prime movers behind the Citizens' Forum project is of the opinion that the group structure could not have been maintained for "as more sources of information and opinion on public affairs developed, and as the novelty factors wore off, I am convinced a growing group program would have had to be much more specific in character, directed to the special interests of a segment of the population much more related to practical concerns and to the economics of a livelihood."[13] Furthermore, she continues "people watched T.V., that is, they sat and viewed a succession of programs during an evening. Broadcasts provoked informal discussion and comment--that is certainly true. And the program reached a very large audience and wider range of people. But viewers were not likely to watch a program, turn off the set, and then hold organized group discussion, as they had done on radio. As a practical matter, the time periods of CF-TV broadcasts would not encourage it anyway. But in my view there was a shift in mood, away from 'worthy' pursuits. Remember we had no depression - times were bumper for at least many, many people."[14] Others, of course, have put forward the view that there is really, no proof that the T.V. programme could not have functioned with a group structure.

[13] Notes and Queries, p. 6.

[14] Ibid., p. 6.

Experiments and Developmental Trends

During its first few years on television, Citizens' Forum was generally regarded as being in the nature of an experiment. This outlook manifested itself in a concern for special and various methods of appraising the programme.[15] One such method involved an organizational innovation. A committee appropriately called the Working Committee was established in 1956. The members of the Committee were drawn from the C.B.C., C.A.A.E. and various institutions not formally a part of Forums organizational structure. The Committee members met frequently and were charged with furnishing an unbiased evaluation of the television programme with a view to initiating practical improvements.

For a similar purpose, during the 1956-57 season, a small pilot study was carried out at the Ryerson Institute of Technology in an effort to discover whether radio or television was the more effective in stimulating group discussion.[16] The study showed that generally speaking, matters having to do with the nature of the subject, the image projected by the panelists and the personality or atmosphere surrounding the discussion group were factors of greater importance in stimulating group discussion than the medium utilized. A second study undertaken in the following season by the C.A.A.E. showed, convincingly, that the television portion of the Citizens' Forum project was a stimulant to discussion and that, although unorganized, a good deal of discussion among families and small groups of friends took place following the weekly broadcast.[17] The findings of these studies must be interpreted with caution, however, for since the inception of the Citizens' Forum television series an evolutionary trend in programming techniques began to develop that was bound to weigh heavily in all future deliberations concerning the question of whether the Forum's television series was or was not a stimulant to discussion. The trend of which I speak, of course, was the gradual displacement of the familar panel discussion type of programme of the earlier years by the documentary, and conference type of programmes.

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[15] Generally speaking, until television programme evaluation was carried on by the National and Provincial offices. Programme evaluation was made in respect to the number and quality of the forums participating in the programme as determined by an annual questionaire and audience mail.

[16] Appended to the "Annual Report of the CAAE on Citizens' Forum," Citizens' Forum (1956-57), Toronto: The CAAE Archives.

That the documentary should have replaced the panel discussion was not unnatural. John Grierson, in his work for the National Film Board some years earlier, had demonstrated the power and the insight that could be built into this type of programme. Moreover, he had shown that the documentary was particular useful in providing for the extensive examination of a subject or situation. This aspect of the documentary was admirably suited to the new type of audience that had grown up around the Citizens' Forum programme--the individual listening audience. For the documentary, which was in the nature of a visual essay, provided both a background of information and point of view in one package which in turn provided a stimulant to thought, if not discussion. Before television the Radio Forum had depended on three separate but complementary programming techniques to bring the group listening audience to this same end. The study materials provided the background of information, the panel discussion brought forward conflicting opinions and it was left to the various discussion groups to structure these conflicting opinions into an acceptable form; that is, a concensus of opinion arrived at through discussion. This process was essentially a cumulative one which depended on group judgement to bring it to its natural end. The documentary, however, developed a subject "all in one piece", as it were, and theoretically demanded little other than the viewer accept or reject its findings; so that in the final analysis it was not the medium but the disposition of the individual Forum viewer on which discussion depended. Thus while there was really nothing inherent in television disparaging of discussion, the trend toward the use of documentary techniques for the television production of Citizens' Forum was not especially designed for or encouraging of organized discussion.

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[17] See generally Citizens' Forum (1957-58), Toronto: The CAAE Archives.

The trend toward the documentary and conference type of programmes was an obvious one and reflected in large measure, the decision tentatively agreed to following the 1947-48 season to develop the individual listening audience. And although, as pointed out many times before, the forums organized to employ the broadcast series as a basis for discussion progressively diminished in importance. The programme organizers at the CAAE were reluctant to abandon the group discussion aspect of the programme. For the most part, this reluctance was successfully countered by the new 'High Priests' of the broadcasting world--the television producers. For "as television became more sophisticated, people involved in the program at the C.B.C. tended to be much more interested in the craft of production and much less concerned with 'education' ... The producer saw a television series as a world in which he was king."[18] It soon followed that the CAAE "lost close contact with the content of the broadcasts" and "it became increasingly difficult to prepare printed material in support of the program"[19] and, hence, organize

[18] Wilson MS., p. 3.

[19] Ibid., p.4.

groups and promote interest around the broadcasts. Nevertheless the persistence of the CAAE organizers was not entirely without success and their reluctance to abandon the organized use of the series manifested itself in two positive forms: television specials, designed specifically to promote group organization and the formation of a radio series independent of the television portion of Citizens' Forums. One such "special" was put on during the 1958-59 season. It consisted of two series of three programmes on unemployment and education around which, it was hoped, community interest groups would organize. Both the National and Provincial Offices,

> did a good deal of work in promoting the use of the special series. A greatly increased pamphlet order for both topics was the result of these efforts. Organizations such as the Workers' Educational Association and the Foreman's Clubs of the YMCA formed special groups to discuss the Unemployment series. The most successful organization, however, took place around the Education broadcasts. The provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were extremely active and enlisted the co-operation of a wide group of people and agencies in the field of education. Nova Scotia reports that approximately fifty special groups took part in discussions around the series, and New Brunswick carried on five workshops on educational problems in the province."[20]

Although highly successfull, the amount of organization and great cost of putting on these 'specials' were limiting to the number that could be televised, and generally speaking, it was believed that if concessions to group organization were to be made they could best be made through radio. Thus reserving Forum's television presentation for the individual viewing audience while radio forum could be retained as the basis for the discussion group aspect of the project. Hence, it was suggested that a radio production distinct from the television production should be made. However, this suggestion, made in the Spring of 1957, was not acted upon by the Forum's producers until the Spring of 1962. Separate productions, of course, added to production costs and required a great deal more of all who were involved in putting the Forum on the air. Therefore, initially they were largely limited to occasions when a cancellation in the television series occurred or when the special production of a programme required the more extensive coverage that could be obtained on the national radio network. Generally speaking, on those occasions when circumstances urged that a separation of the radio and television programmes be made, the results were highly successful. For example during the 1959-60 season, a separate programme was prepared for a discussion of Racial Discrimination on radio. The programme "was one of the outstanding broadcasts of the year and it won Citizens' Forum a special national award at the Institute for Education by Radio-Television of Columbus, Ohio ... the citation read: 'For mature, realistic and thought-provoking commentary on the explosive issues of our day, Citizens' Forum is a rare example of the potential of public affairs, radio Broadcasting' ".[21] It was undoubtedly owing to the success of such programmes as this and the lingering desire felt by some to maintain the group discussion aspect of the programme that the decision to organize a completely separate television and radio programmes came in to being during the 1962-63 broadcasting season. In most cases, the same general subject matter was used on the two media, but completely different presentations were arranged. The television presentation, aired as a documentary, often took the form of an extended series of programmes involving an in-depth examination of a general theme such as "Industry" or "The Family". On radio, a common mode of production was to take each of the subjects and break them down into two parts, or programmes, the first consisting of an inter-city link up between two discussion panels, and the second of commentary provided from the listening audience on the discussion that took place the previous week. This commentary was secured through the "open line" or, as it is now known, "hot line" type of programmes that were being carried by a number of private radio stations affiliated with the national radio network.

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[20] "Annual Report of the CAAE on Citizens' Forum," Citizens' Forum (1958-59), Toronto: The CAAE Archives, p. 12.

Every effort was made by the Citizens' Forum

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[21] "Annual Report of the CAAE on Citizens' Forum," Citizens' Forum (1959-60), Toronto: The CAAE Archives, p.4.

Committee of the C.A.A.E., formerly the National Advisory Board,[22] to encourage special interest groups and the few remaining forums to use the radio programmes or parts of the programme as a basis for organized discussion. The topics chosen for Citizens' Forum radio production also provided sustenance to the modest revival being enjoyed by the group discussion aspect of the project. For, generally speaking, the programmes attempted to select topics on which, it was thought, the Canadian listening public would hold strong views or feelings. Thus hopefully, encouraging listener participation and furnishing a stimulant to discussion.

The Craft of Production

The new life taken on by the Radio Forum at this time was matched by the fresh and innovating spirit that presided over the Forum's television production -- experimentation with new formats and production techniques were attempted; video tapes were made of bilingual seminars and conferences and were later televised; an extended series of dramas concerning the pressures and problems of family living were arranged; and National political debates and themes of importance to the Canadian nation were developed in half-yearly series. It was felt that these new formats and production techniques would not only be more pleasing to the viewer but could be of service in developing the subject matter more fully. At the same time much thought went into organizing and planning for a variety of discussion techniques. During the 1956-57 broadcast season, for example, several methods of presenting the subject material were attempted which are typical in their diversity of the sort of approach that was made by the television producers of Citizens' Forum:[23]

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[22] "Report on Citizens' Forum (C.B.C.)," Citizens' Forum (1956-57), Toronto: the CAAE Archives, p.1.

> Cross Examination: A method often used for highly sensitive topics. It involved presenting both sides of an argument after which followed a period of questioning by a panel of experts or studio audience.
>
> Debate: The debating style was usually employed for highly sensitive or controversial topics about which public opinion had polarized.
>
> Discussion Based on Quotations or Questions: This method was felt to be appropriate for academic or abstract topics. Questions and/or quotations were usually submitted by the general viewing audience. These submissions were then examined and several of the more relevant ones were chosen for discussion. This served to keep the discussion within the bounds of the audiences' interest and level of comprehension.
>
> Informal Conversation: This method was considered desirable when discussing complex and perhaps controversial subjects which involved an important personality or required a specialist's knowledge.
>
> Large Panel: This method was employed at times when a cross-section of Canadian opinion and thought rather than the intensive development of a subject was felt to be appropriate. Usually the subjects chosen for such broadcasts

[23] "Report on Citizens' Forum Broadcasts (C.B.C.)," Citizens' Forum (1956-57), Toronto: The CAAE Archives, p.2.

> were intellectually light ..."New Year's Resolutions For Canada" a programme aired during the 1956-57 broadcast series was one such programme.
>
> Reverse Press Conference: This was a novel method of presenting a subject and, as its title implies, involved the questioning, by public figures, of critics of public policy.
>
> Inter-City Panel Discussion: This method was valuable as a means of putting regional and/or ethnic viewpoints against a national background or viewpoint.

What the People Said

The audience mail received at the National Office steadily increased in volume throughout the Forum's television period, and continuously affirmed the audience's enthusiastic response to the programme and a substantial measure of participation in it. A large number of those who wrote plainly demonstrated a serious concern for the series and through their extensive commentaries, many of the correspondants revealed "that informal discussion in the family living-room was a frequent aftermath of the broadcasts".[24] Audience interest was also reflected in the many requests of organizations for video tapes of the programmes and study material for use in their own programmes.[25] In short, it appears that the effort made by the television producers of the Forum series to extend the Forums audience and to provide the listening public with a varied and interesting programme was favourably received.

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[24] "Annual Report of the CAAE on Citizens' Forum," Citizens' Forum (1957-58), Toronto: the CAAE Archives, p.4.

[25] Ibid. (1962-63), p.6.

PART III.

SOME MATERIALS ON WHAT FORUM SAID

CHAPTER VIII

TOPIC COVERAGE

General Coverage Areas

Up until now, we have examined Citizens' Forum in terms of its psychological origins and historical development. In doing so, we have been largely concerned with the choice, organization and manner of employing the media to convey the message postulated by the Forum's organizers. In short, we have examined the Why? and How? of Citizens' Forum; and it is now time to provide a third dimension to the discussion--the dimension What?

To begin with, during the period 23 November 1943 - 25 April 1963 approximately 500[1] radio and television broadcasts were produced for the Citizens' Forum programme. These broadcasts covered a wide range of subjects and touched on almost all issues that were relevant and some it must be admitted, that were not so relevant, to Canada's international and national life during the twenty year period of their production. It is difficult to provide an exact measurement of the general subject areas covered by the 500 broadcasts. For, as we saw earlier, although there were three distinct areas of programme coverage[2] programme policy dictated that, as far as possible, the subjects aired should be meaningful to all levels of Canadian society. That is to say, for example, that even topics of international import should be so structured that their relevance to the community scene would be made known. Indeed, in identifying just those subjects which on the basis of their title would appear to fall within one or the other of the three areas of programme coverage, there remains almost 30% of the total number of broadcasts which could relate to one or all of the general coverage areas.[3]

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[1] By actual count 494 television and radio broadcasts were aired during 1943/44-1962/63 period of our concern.

Assuming that the programmes within this 30% remainder would distribute themselves evenly throughout the coverage areas, it would appear that the programme planners were quite conscientious in implementing programme policy. However, even if this assumption were proved to be a valid one, it tells us little of the trends or emphases in the Citizens' Forum programme as a whole. It is not until we break these general coverage areas down into what we might call, specific subject areas that these trends begin to appear.

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[2] See p. 89-90.

[3] A rough approximation based on the total number of programmes smoothed to 500. The distribution over the three subject areas was: International 24%; National 25%; Community and Family 21%. Again these are rough approximations based on a title count and should be interpreted with caution by the reader.

CHART IV*

MAJOR COVERAGE AREAS

1943 - 63	1943-44 1947-48	1948-49 1952-53	1953-54 1957-58	1958-59 1962-63
International Affairs 19.8%	28.45	26.78	21.74	14.65
Economics 12.8%	11.38	12.48	16.52	12.74
Work 12.2%	16.26	9.17	13.04	10.6
Government 9.6%	7.31	8.03	6.95	14.01
Morality, Ethics, Religion 9.4%	5.89	11.6	11.9	7.86
Education 6.4%	4.87	8.03	11.5	11.45

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*Source: The Annual Reports of the CAAE and C.B.C. on Citizens' Forum 1943-44/1962-63 and The Bannerman Research on Citizens' Forum contained in a file marked the same in the CAAE archives on Citizens' Forum, Toronto. Calculation: By percentage of all programs in the period 1943-1963. Total number of programs smoothed to 500: Error 0.06%.

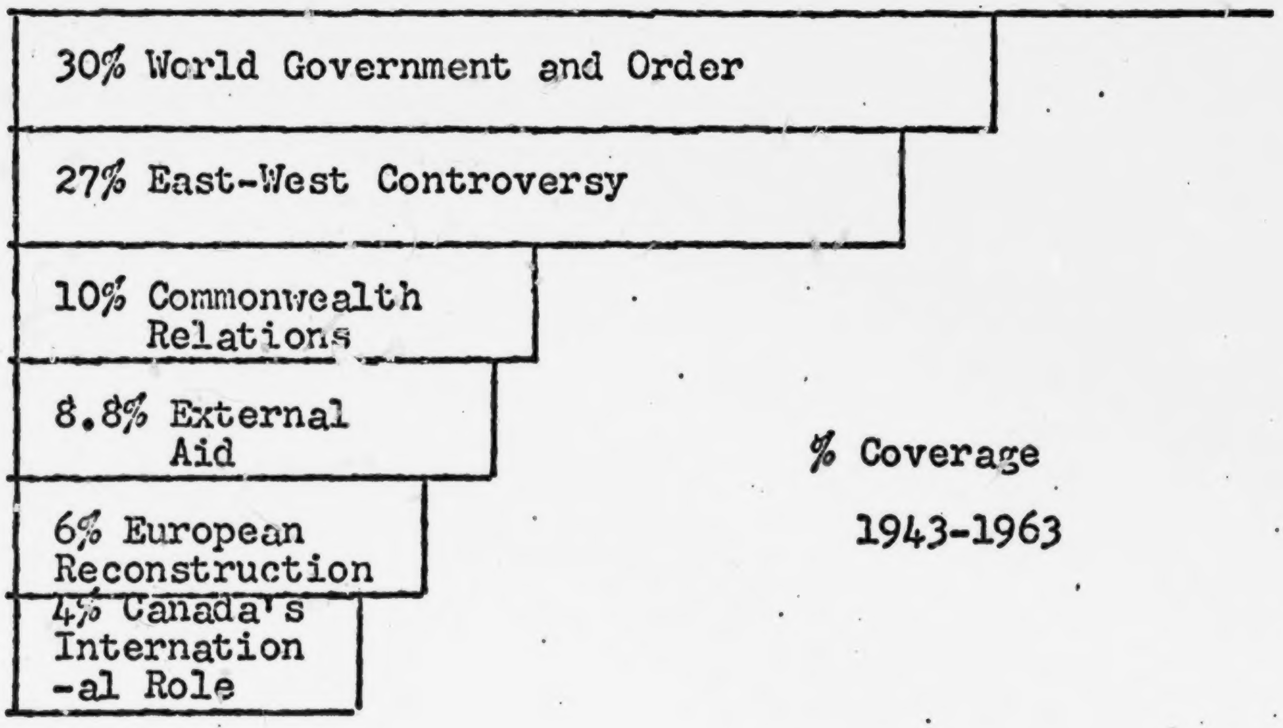
International Affairs

As Chart IV indicates, by far the greatest number of programmes were devoted to International Affairs. At first sight, this would seem to denote a disproportionate share of the total coverage. However, it must be remembered that International Affairs, although defined here as a 'topic', was also one of the three main coverage areas designated by the Forum's programme planners and as such, its coverage represents deliberate program policy and not the presence of an unwarranted bias or disproportionate emphasis in selecting Forum topics. Indeed, the question that must be raised here is not whether the share of the total coverage allotted International Affairs represents a significant imbalance, rather the question is whether the programme policy itself can be justified. This, in turn, involves a consideration of the thought which led to the founding of the Citizens' Forum programme, from which its programme policy was essentially derived. It would be tedious, however, to reiterate, in its entirety, the philosophy from which Citizens' Forum evolved for it has been covered adequately in the preceding chapters of this work. Let it be sufficient to say that Citizens' Forum was an evolutionary phenomenon founded on the belief that the challenges made and changes being worked upon the Canadian way of life could best be met and adapted to by an informed citizenry. If we feel that this is a valid philosophy, then it is only a matter of deciding if the challenges that were being made on the international scene between 1943 and 1963 were such that their potential impact upon the Canadian way of life was of sufficient proportions to justify designating International Affairs as a major programme area. If we resolve this question affirmatively which we should, it follows that we must also grant that the Forum's programme policy can be justified as it relates to International Affairs.

The topics within this subject area appear to be a fairly accurate reflection of Canada's western allegiances[4] and of the role of "middleman-peace keeper" that she assumed in world affairs following the allied victory in 1945. Thematically, these topics may be ordered under the following headings -- their percentage distribution is approximate but reliable as an indication of the emphasis put upon the different coverage areas.

[4] Allegiances, that is, in the political and economic sense.

CHART V*



*Source: Annual Reports of the CAAE and C.B.C. on Citizens' Forum (1943/44-1962/63). Total number of programmes -- 90.

The chart clearly indicates that the role projected for Citizens' Forum in this area was as an interpreter of current events. And, of course, this is a valuable contribution to make. However, viewing Citizens' Forum as a corporate educator, as it were, there is a function beyond the relatively pragmatic function of interpreting and reporting that seems to be lacking here -- the guidance function. That is to say, interpolated in terms of the coverage areas themselves, there seems to have been given little acknowledgement of the new social and political orientations that were bursting forth in large areas of the underdeveloped parts of the world. For example, of the 500 broadcasts aired on the Citizens' Forum programme between 1943 and 1963, only one dealt specifically with Latin America,[5] one with Africa,[6] two with Asia,[7] and one with Africa and Asia.[8] It will also seem strangely inconsistent to those readers who hold other than a pragmatic view of world affairs that no more than four of the broadcasts attempted a detailed study of the role Canada was playing and could play in this field.[9] At the same time, however, the reader must not forget that the international affairs broadcasts were programmed for a voluntary listening audience. Hence, the pragmatic approach made to this somewhat complex topic was beneficial from a programmers point of view in that it fed on current issues that were likely to be of interest to the general listening public. Whereas a more abstract or theoretical treatment of the international scene, or coverage extended beyong that mirrored in popular concern or official policy might have seriously imposed upon the loyalty of the listening audience and they, afterall,

[5] Upsurge in Latin America, 18 January 1952.

[6] Change in Africa, 16 February 1961.

[7] How Can the Western Powers Advance Democracy in Asia, 22 February 1961; The Rise of Asia, 14 November 1944.

[8] Are We Making Enemies in Africa and Asia, 2 February, 1956.

[9] How is Canadian External Policy Made, 4 February 1948; What is Canada's Position in World Councils, 22 November 1962; What is Canada's Role in World Affairs, 25 November 1962 / 2 December 1962.

constituted the life blood of the Citizens' Forum programme.

Canadian - American Relations[10]

On the whole, this clearly important subject seems to have been given just consideration - at least in intention. The topics programmed for discussion were concerned generally with defining Canada's role in North American Continentalism with economics, politics and defence serving as the major subject areas. The approach made to these issues appears to be coloured by the defensiveness which often times characterizes the man-in-the-street attitude towards this subject. The words and phrases within programme titles, themselves, reflect the popular rhetoric of the day. However, hopefully the emotionality that for Canadians, at least, attentuates expressions such as 'American Satellite' and 'American echo' would not have seriously imposed upon the rationality of the listening audience.

One aspect of the Canadian-American relationship that seems to have been neglected in what is otherwise an adequately covered subject area, is emigration to the United States of both native-born Canadians and immi-

[10] Percentage of total coverage 4.2%.

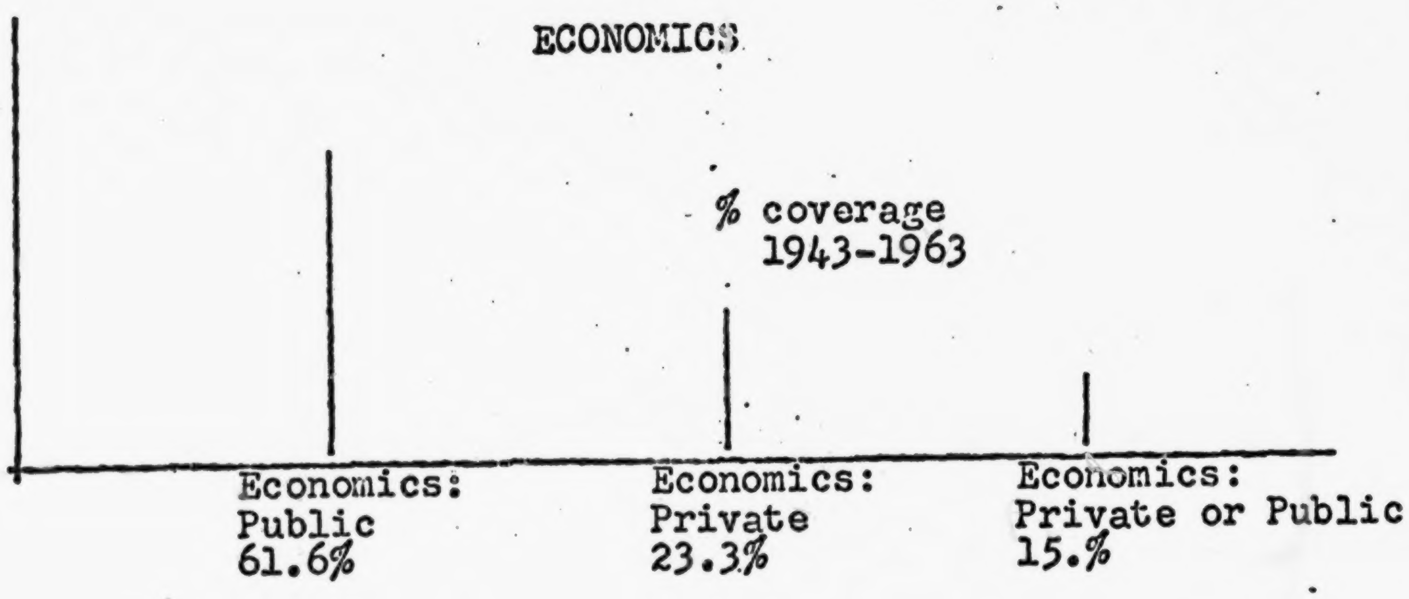
grants to this country.[11] Considering the obvious importance of emigration to a vastly underpopulated country such as ours, this is truly an unjustifiable neglect.[12]

Economics: Personal and Public

The consideration given Economic Affairs on Citizens' Forum is notable both for its extensive coverage of major economic trends and its relative neglect of questions having to do with the personal economics of the consumer.

CHART VI*

ECONOMICS



*Source: The Annual Reports of the CAAE and C.B.C. on Citizens' Forum. Total number of programmes smoothed to 60: Error 0.02%.

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[11] Between the years 1943-63 there appears to have been only one broadcast (10 January 1942) that deals specifically with emigration. This is somewhat surprising in view of the considerable proportions sometimes attained by this outward movement.

[12] The Bannerman Research on Citizens' Forum, on File, Toronto, the CAAE Archives.

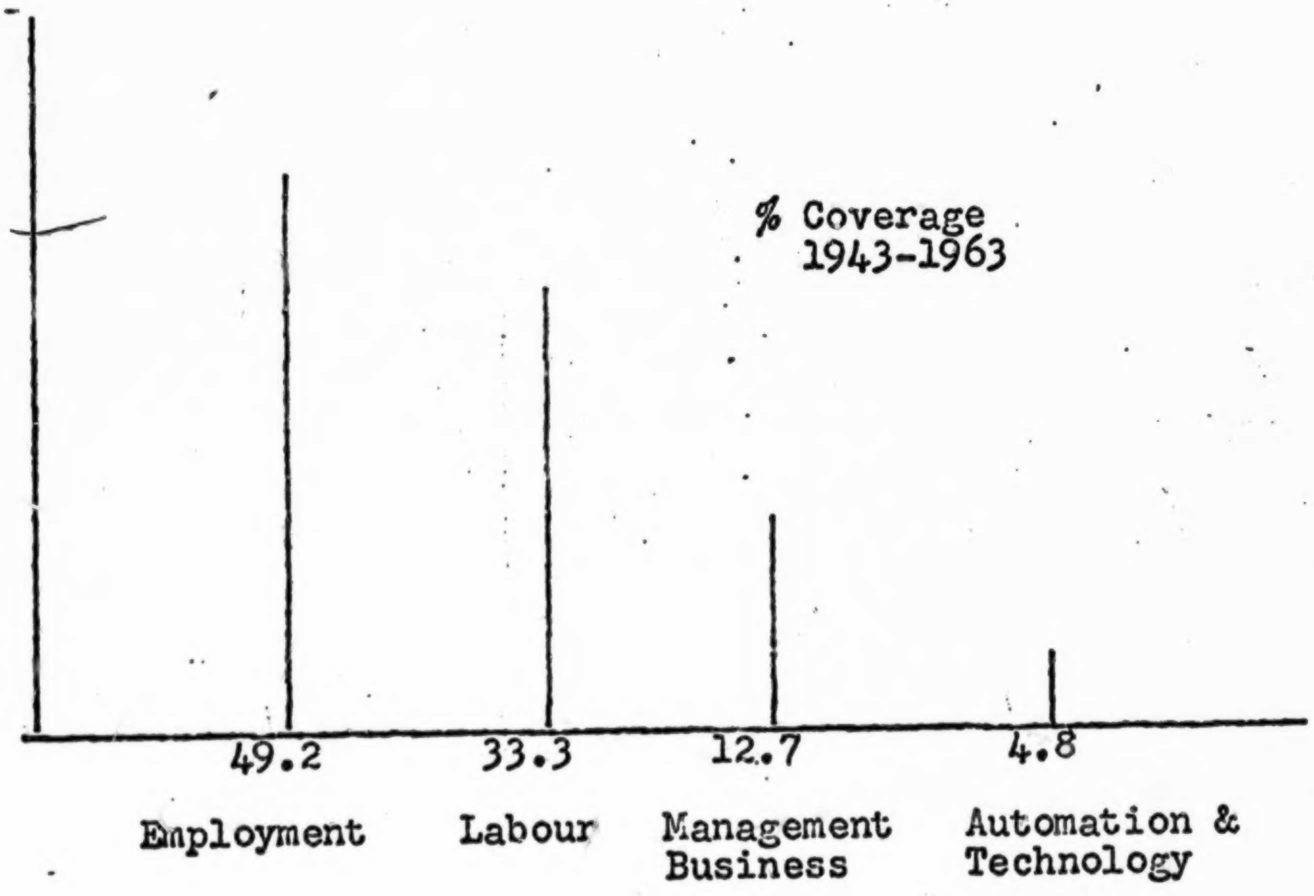
The most persistenly occuring themes revolve about the nations concern over economic control, the distribution of wealth and the economic alternatives being made available to Canadians through industrial growth. This concern led, in turn, to a consideration of the relationships between public and private enterprise; price controls and supports; national planning; inflation; regional and national disparities; and export markets. There can be no question that these items were and still are of great importance to the economic life of Canada, however, their importance _per se_, does not provide sufficient reason for what seems to be the rather disproportionate share of the total coverage allotted to questions relating to consumer affairs. This neglect is especially disconcenting in view of the impact made upon the Canadian economy by consumer credit and the tremendous rise in income levels experienced by our population during the twenty year period of our concern. Indeed, even within the "Public Economics" category itself, such important items as social investment, transportation and the growth of tertiary industry receive strikingly less consideration than their import merits.

The World of Work[13]

The over-all coverage of the problems and issues associated with the working world on Citizens' Forum appears to have been adequate.

CHART VII*

THE WORLD OF WORK



*Source: The Annual Reports of the CAAE and C.B.C. on Citizens' Forum. Total number of programmes --63.

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[13] This category is inclusive of matters having to do with -- labour and management; employment; and automation and technology.

The coverage given labour issues, excepting for an inexplicable four year gap[14] in which there was no broadcasts dealing specifically with this subject, is especially interesting in that there seems to have been an attempt made to portray the often neglected ideological comprise ultimately made by Canadian labour between the social unionism of the British and the labourism practiced by the Americans.[15] What is remarkable about this attempt is that it was made during a period in which the course eventually taken by Canadian unionists was still very much in doubt. This approach is somewhat more sophisticated than the usual manner of broaching labour issues through definitions of labour's power base and distribution, which perspective is provided, but by no means dominant. At the same time, questions relating to management are often framed in terms of power and 'Big Business'--a frame of reference which may denote the presence of a pro-labour bias which should be made to bear up under further scrutiny. Still in a period of almost unrestrained industrial growth, where the Corporation was 'king' as it were, it is refreshing to find that some institutions were willing to maintain the citizen's watch.

The questions raised in the section on Employment,

[14] 18 March 1954-6 March 1958.

[15] See John Porter, The Vertical Mosaic, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965, pp. 314-318.

and indeed, the extensive coverage given it, mirror what always has been an area of very real concern to Canadians. Seasonal unemployment; a guaranteed annual wage; regional unemployment and full employment are all perennial issues raised by the Canadian citizenry and as a whole, the benefice of much political controversy. However, in concentrating on these admittedly important and, in terms of audience, interesting subjects, the Forum has again, it seems, neglected its leadership function. For of the 35 broadcasts that comprise the section on Employment, no more than three[16] were designed to explore the impact being made by automation and technology upon the employment scene, with manpower retraining and skill developments receiving like consideration. Indeed, it was not until late in 1958 that a concerted effort was made to explain unemployment in terms of its causes and effects or to interpret the role of the citizen in minimizing its consequences. Clearly these were all subjects whose importance and potential impact warranted greater consideration.

The approach made to Government seems to have developed out of the role of 'people's advocate' played

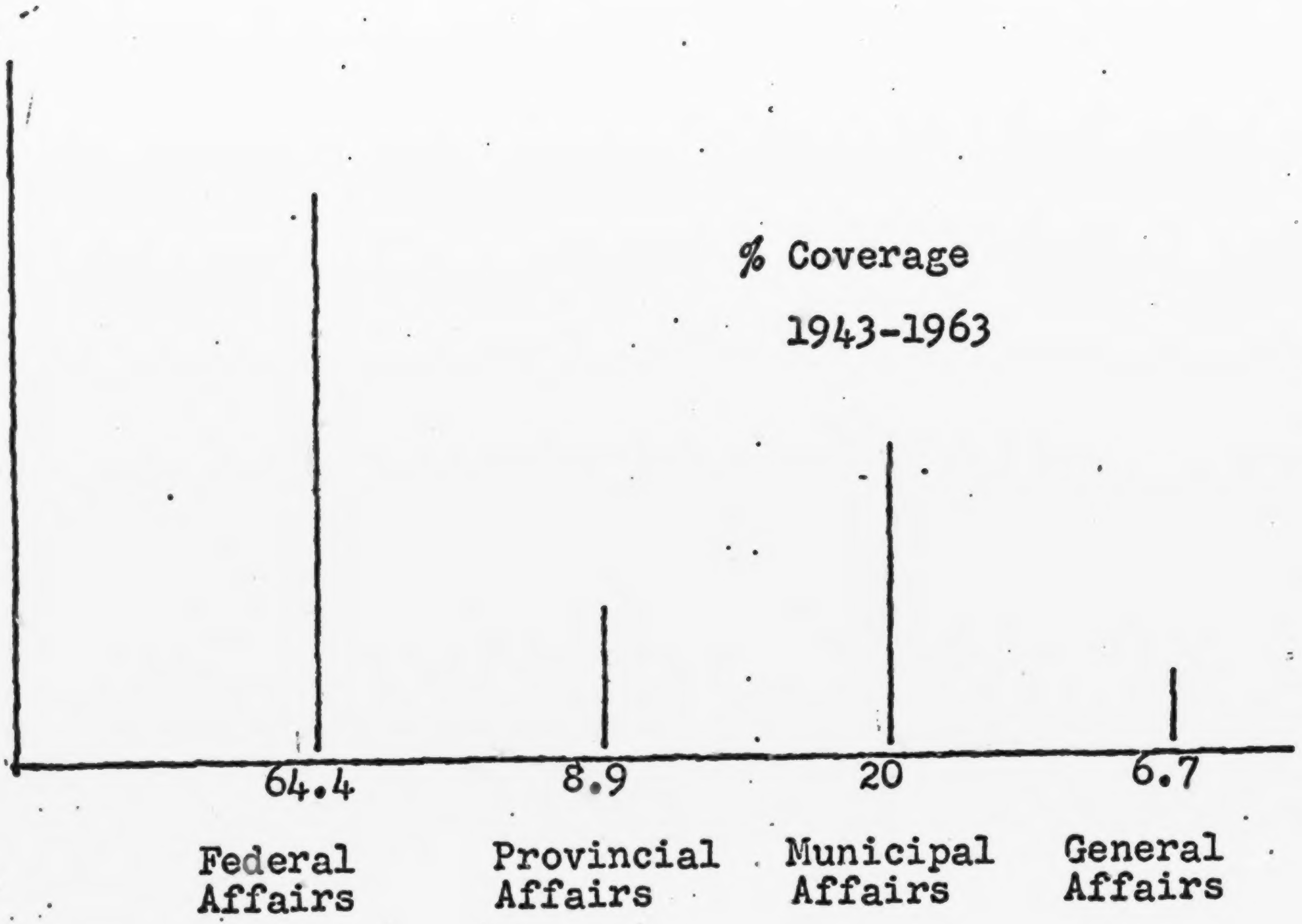
[16] Wanted: 100,000 Technicians, 10 January 1957; With the Coming of Automation, 15 April 1962; Push Button Woman, 13 January 1963. It should be noted, however, that a series of 13 broadcasts on technology was aired during the Winter of 1962. I have not considered them in this instance as they related more to a way of living than with employment, specifically.

by Forum's first Chairman, Morley Callaghan. In retrospect, as with 'Big Business', this approach was admirably suited to the times. For it was inevitable that the complacency courted by the moderate, middle-of-the-road policies, put forward by the Liberals during the twelve years of their political domination following World War II would be found frustrating to those observant of the rapid advances and startling shifts being made in the Canadian way of life. The overbearing attitude and lack of consideration displayed by the Liberals for the integrity of parliament during the latter part of their reign further confirms the propriety of the approach made to Government by Citizens' Forum as did, we should add, the relatively inactive Conservative Governments of 1957 and 1958.

At its most subtle, this approach manifested itself in discussions of the party system and government responsibility, however, subtlely by no means characterized the mood of Forum. Much revealing of Forum's disposition toward Government are the titles -- Are the Liberals in to Stay (2 Dec. 54); Are Bureaucrats Running the Country (19 Jan. 50); Has Parliament Become a Rubber Stamp for the Cabinet (12 Mar. 53) and Could Parliament be Improved (25, 29 Jan. 59).

CHART VIII*

GOVERNMENT



*Source: The Annual Reports of the CAAE and C.B.C. on Citizens' Forum. Total number of programmes -- 45.

The approach made to government by Citizens' Forum may be commended as fulfilling one of the chief functions the project was intended to have--alerting and informing the public of those aspects of Canada's national life which, without an awareness, would be in danger of perishing. At the same time, the interpretation given to "national life" as it relates to government seems at first sight to have been a somewhat narrow one in so far as relatively little attention was paid to provincial and municipal governments, as political entities in themselves. Although it may be argued that what appears to be a significant inbalance in the coverage of these subjects, is simply a reflection of the collectivist approach made to government as a whole. It is difficult to ascertain the raison d'etre of this approach, however, clearly in our Canadian federation the rigid division of powers which has sustained the politics of sectional interests is less attractive that "the idea of a general national interest transcending these special and provincial interests".[17] Since World War II the increasing complexity of our technology and the growing diversity of the forces which mold out social, cultural and economic lives have demanded greater and greater interdependency in thought and action. This trend towards interdependency has also made itself felt in the sphere of politics, although in practice it has never been acknowledged; which is somewhat paradoxical in so far as 'government' is in large measure responsible for sustaining the vitality of our national life--a responsibility which involves their close scrutiny of the problems and difficulties arising out of our growing interdependency. What Citizen's Forum attempted to do was to make the fact of 'political interdependency' an object of general national interest, thereby, hopefully providing a basis on which a national concensus could evolve which again, hopefully, would replace the political sectionalism that has continually threatened our national life.

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[17] Frank H. Underhill, The Image of Confederation: The Massey Lectures (Third Series), Toronto: The Hunter Rose Company, 1967, p.65.

Morality, Ethics and Religion

World War II, the spread of marxist materialism and, to a lesser extent the Korean Police Action and the various peace keeping duties embarked upon by Canadians between 1943 and 1963 accentuated the fact that it was not possible to assume that human rights and the sanctity of the moral personality were inviolable and on-going rights. Similarly, "no great political or social upheaval in the country has served to break the close ties with a past which placed a great emphasis upon religious values of life".[18] Thus to find such matters among the six most covered topics on Citizens' Forum is not really surprising.

There are no discernable trends in the coverage of these matters and the topics that we discussed are very much as one might expect in the light of the above considerations. Some of the more recurrent themes are: civil rights, prejudice, discrimination, censorship, standards of morality, pacificism, the criminal, religious education, politics and the pulpit, atheism, and the church in society. Generally speaking, the overall coverage of the moral, ethical and religious issues with which we are concerned here appears adequate, however, the spacing of the programmes that may be indexed under the heading of religion, in the sense of Religion, specifically, must be questions. There are two gaps of five years, and one each of four and two years in which there were no programmes that dealt with this subject.[19] This sporadic and token recognition given Religion, as well certain other important subjects treated in previous sections, suggests the possibility that the generality of Forum's programme policy provided insufficient direction to the programme as a whole.

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[18] S.D. Clark, The Developing Canadian Community, Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1962, p. 182.

Education

The major issues pertaining to the public school sector of education, - that is, the primary, elementary and secondary school levels - appear on the whole to have been given justice. The aims and goals of our educational systems; curricula--its standardization, composition and determinats; administration and finance in education; the drop-out; and progressive trends in education constitute the major issues raised in this section.

The most striking aspect of the consideration given educational matters is the relatively slight treatment given matters having to do with technical and vocational education per se, the apprenticeship system, manpower training and re-training, and indeed of any educational activities relevant to the adult excepting those which take place in the university. Certainly the Canadian industrial evolution and the concommittant need of society to sustain it by providing a broader technology base and greater technological competencies were already in prospect by the middle and late forties. Of course, a discussion of these matters would necessarily have involved raising the question of whether education ought to be a function participated in by a federal authority -- a question which has the dubious distinction of having raised more eyebrows per capita than any issue in the history of our Country, excepting perhaps for the foreign ownership of our natural resources. However, the Forum's organizers and programmers were not a timorous lot, nor did they shun the more controversial issues relevant to our national life or buckle under the prospect of opposition. So it is doubtful whether the controversial aspect of this subject would have caused what appears to be this incomprehensible neglect. In the end, the neglect, as with that of certain subjects pertaining to international affairs and the world of work, may be attributed, as indicated in the previous section, to the generality of Forum's programme policy. In any event, it is rather ironic to note this neglect in the Citizens' Forums programme in as much as the Forum itself, was essentially an educational enterprise directed at adults and indeed, an education enterprise which was produced and co-ordinated by a national, voluntary, educational agency well aware of the significance of the less academic side of education; and a crown corporation responsible to a federal authority for protecting and developing the public's interest.

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[19] These gaps occurred: 28 November 1944 - 10 November 1949 and 28 November 1957 - 13 December 1962; 2 November 1950 - 21 October 1954; 22 December 1955 - 28 November 1957.

Minor Chords

The seven general subject areas briefly discussed above comprise approximately 75% of the total number of programs broadcast on Citizen's Forums. The degree to which this percentage mirrored the public's interest or concern during the years in question is difficult to ascertain. Certainly the areas discussed were and still are important aspects of our national life and the treatment even if, at times, contrary to the public interest was not regarded as being incompatible with the educational purpose of the project. It is obvious, however, that whether these major subjects areas mirror the public's interest, the Forum's educational purpose or both, as it most likely, our national life has yet a broader base than that represented by the above subject areas.

Of chief importance among those aspects contributing to this broader base, are English and French Canadian relations. Unfortunately, the importance of this subject is not reflected in the number of programs devoted to it (8). This apparent neglect of what has been a national issue for at least a hundred years is indeed unconsistent with the high purpose set out for Citizens' Forum. Even assuming that Les Idees en Marche, Forum's French Canadian counterpart, would have provided adequate coverage of French-Canadian affairs, there still would have remained the unsatisfied need of airing this question bilaterally, as it were.

Of the remaining broadcasts, constituting the minor chords struck in the Citizens' Forum programme, questions concerned with the communications media figure most prominently - this was a natural emphasis view of the struggle that was waged over men's minds during the Second World War on these media and the difficulties that were necessary to surmount in setting up and sustaining our publicly-owned broadcasting system; not to mention the advent, for the Canadian public, of television and the role of the press in overcoming the subtle but powerful opposition that was directed at Citizens' Forum itself.[20] Other programme areas which appear to have received adequate coverage as minor emphases are health, welfare (in the general philosophical sense of the word) and urban growth; while token recognition is given to science, youth, the aged and the arts. Commentary on these items is difficult for,

[20] See pp. 55-56

as indicated, they were accorded only minimal coverage. However, taking into account the whole question of relative coverage there are a number of tentative conclusions that may be drawn which relate to these subject area.

A Closing Word

There are essentially three functions that a programme such as Citizens' Forum should fulfill: a watchman function (to alter listeners to potential threats to and opportunities for creating a better national life); a policy function (to provide listeners with information requisite to their taking part in the nation's policy and decision making process); and the socializing or teaching function (to bring the listener into the mainstream of our nation life so that he might implement policy decision in terms acceptable to his society).[21] Although each of these functions are distinctive entities, and essential to the viability of an information service, the degree to which they sustain this viability depends upon their combined presence. And it is perhaps an indication of why Citizens' Forum enjoyed the success that it did that, generally speaking, one can find evidence of the presence of all three of these functions in the coverage areas commented upon in this work.

[21] Wilbur Schramm, Mass Media and National Development, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964, p.38.

External Affairs

The emphasis on International Affairs and North American Continentalism that reflect the world's growing interdependency can be said to have fulfilled Forum's role as watchman, in so far as an awareness of these matters, on which depends the maintenance of viable working relationships within the world community, is the only alternative to the fear bred of ignorance which would ultimately bring about our self destruction if manifested in a nuclear holocaust. In turn, the approach made to these matters -- providing listeners with information about the important and current issues in this field and, at least in intention furnishing this information with a Canadian perspective -- satisfied the policy and teaching roles of Forum, in as much as the information provided appears to have provided a sufficient basis for intelligent participation by the listening public in policy making and the perspective furnished was such that the contribution of the listener to policy making could be made in relation to our national development and goals.

Domestic Affairs

Clearly the range and diversity of the subject areas that form this category are sufficient as evidence that Citizens' Forum was fulfilling it's teaching, socializing and policy functions. Indeed, there are a number of undertakings that were initiated by Citizens' Forum groups "such as a community church, a city public library, a community planning association, teen-age centers, playgrounds and neighbourhood plans for the co-operative care of children"[22] that demonstrate that policy making and active participation in the development of our national life were precipated by the Forum broadcasts. However, the degree to which Forum fulfilled its capacity as watchman is somewhat more difficult to ascertain. For in the matters of government, and, to a lesser extent, economics, the function of watchman is unquestionably served. While, at the same time, the lack of consideration that appears to have been given demographic trends; scientific matters; French and English Canadian relations; tertiary industry; and social investment seems to indicate that the watch kept by Forum was not as effective as it might have been. We must remember, however, that the horizon of our national life or, for that matter, any countries national life is a vast one of rapidly changing outline. Hence, it is only reasonable to assume that in scanning it, there were bound to be certain emerging forms which escaped the attention of the Forum watchmen.

[22] Citizens' Forum MS., p. 8

CHAPTER IX

IN CONCLUSION

> Citizens' Forum ... is a round-table program on which a panel of informed speakers who hold varying viewpoints discuss important issues of the day.
>
> Canada Year Book, 1961.[1]

In some ways the rather sober description of Citizens' Forum quoted above really tells us little about this undertaking. For Citizens' Forum, by 1961 in any event, was more than just 'a round-table programme'. Between 1943 and 1963 the Forum's organizers and producers experimented with and developed various discussion techniques and programme formats in presenting their material of which the round-table was only one. Conference and documentary techniques, public meeting broadcasts, inter-city and inter-regional discussions, reverse press conferences and open-line programmes are just some among a variety of techniques and methods of presentation that were successfully adapted to and developed on the Citizens' Forum programme in the attempt to provide their audience with comprehensive and interesting viewing and listening.

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[1] C.Y.B., Ottawa: The Queens Printer, p. 364.

On the other hand the quotation heading this chapter says much of the course run by Citizens' Forum over the twenty year period of our concern. Initially conceived as an educational enterprise, the Forum programme had a highly structured learning environment in its maiden years. Information was disseminated to the public through both printed and audio-visual media and this in turn was processed by an audience who were organized in study groups. Allowances for feedback, group guidance and appraisal were built into the formal organizational structure of forum--a structure which approximated the federal system of government. The efficacy of this learning environment, however, depended upon the combined viability of its parts--a viability that was, in practice, short-lived.

The project, initiated during a period in which Canada was at war, fell heir to all that may be regarded as being 'good' in such a period. This legacy--social cohesiveness, common purpose and a sense of urgency and excitement which sharpens a peoples insight--was instrumental in sustaining the project during its earliest days. However, with peace came the release of tensions, and Canada began to normalize. The planning apparatus which had worked so well during the war was, in part at least, dismantled and its governors began to take up their prewar interests. The men and women of the armed forces, disbanded, began to seek out in peace that which, either consciously or unconsciously, they had been fighting for in war. In short, people returned to take up personal concerns; to satisfy longstanding, unfullfilled goals; and some, to build entirely new lives. This affected Forum in so far as it was accompanied by a turning away from what might be called 'worthy pursuits' such as Citizens' Forum to more 'functional pursuits' such as finding employment. The immediate and visible effects of this 'turning away' was that the number of groups organized around the Citizens' Forum project were halved in the first year following the Peace.

Although this was a harsh blow it was not a mortal one, more important was that without the wartime legacy, of which I spoke above, it became necessary, for the first time, to demonstrate the need for people to come together in common purpose for a discussion of the issues and events that affect Canada's national life. As it happened, the CAAE, under whose aegis the organized use of the programme fell, did not have the finances or personnel to underwrite such an effort and subsequently the organized use of the programme began to degenerate, dragging behind it the provincial arms of Citizens' Forum, whose task it was to organize the forums. Thus were disfunctional inroads being made into what began as a highly structured and effectively functioning learning environment.

The coming of television to Citizens' Forum abetted this disfunctionalism. The tremendous cost of putting on a television production caused the programme to be shifted to an unpopular time slot--the prime time being saved for commercial programmes. Similarly, the points of the programme's origin were limited to the C.B.C.'s main production centers because of the technical apparatus needed to televise the programme. Thus the early practice of taking the programme into various centers across the Nation to promote the organized use of the programme through the public meeting broadcast became a physical impossibility. Moreover, the half hour allowed the television production of Forum was used entirely for discussion leaving little time for advertising the group aspect of the programme or reporting on the forums' activities. In essence the citizen was being deprived of his 'national platform' and the two-way communications system which had, for some time, sustained this platform was quickly languishing. Lacking financial resources, there was, again, little in the way of curative measures that the CAAE could undertake to rectify matters in this area, and the producer of Citizens' Forum, the C.B.C., was becoming increasingly more interested in the craft of reporting on public affairs than in citizenship training. This, of course, was a natural progression in view of the C.B.C.'s Constitution and really reflected more on the growing inadequacy of that document than on the interests of the actual producers of the Forum programme. Although of the programme organizers at the C.B.C. that is, those who actually produced and directed the programme, it can be said that, excepting for the early years when Forum broadcasts were limited to radio and directed at the forums, their primary concern was always for the wider audience of individuals who, up until Forum's television period, had been left standing in the wings, as it were. And, indeed, by the early sixties much of the CAAE's role as programme planner and promoter had been usurped by the C.B.C. and the educational purpose of Forum had become enervated.

There were, of course, other factors which affected the evolution of Citizens' Forum. The task of organizing about so nebulous an entity as the 'citizen' was, in itself, an enormously difficult one and, as the years wore on, the increasing number of community activities competing for the attention of the Forums audience, undoubtedly affected their response to the programme.

As a model for adult education, however, the Citizen's Forum programme has taught us many lessons; not the least of which is that the efficacy of radio education is enhanced by the listening group. At the same time, the Forum experience suggests that the success of the organized use of this medium for education purposes is largely dependent upon the amount of skilled field leadership that is available for group organization, training and promotion. Similarly the intensive promotional activities; two-way communications flow, and the continuity in broadcast time and format that were central features of Citizen's Forum during its early years on radio--when the educative aspect of the programme was relatively viable--suggest that educators with intensions of designing programmes of a similar nature must give careful consideration to these items in future. Indeed, the attempt by the planners of Citizen's Forum to organize learning nationally through voluntary rather than contractual working relationships, without a clear definition of audience or for that matter, without an effective means of building and evaluating their audience should be rigorously questioned as proper programme procedure. For, ultimately it will be the resolution of these and other similar issues that were in the text of this work that will provide the foundation upon which adult education enterprises of a similar nature may be structured.

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